PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

No. 351. NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 22, 1905. Price 5 Cents.

TOM TRAIN THE BOY ENGINEER OF THE FAST EXPRESS;

OR, ALWAYS AT HIS POST.

By JAS C. MERRITT.

The spectators saw a lithe form cross the station platform. Down between the rails he sprang, and the child was pushed from the track just in the nick of time. By the merest hair's breadth Tom Train escaped the pilot of the locomotive.

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Tom Train, the Boy Engineer of the Fast Express

OR,

Always at His Post.

By JAS. C. MERRITT.

CHAPTER I.

SHOWING HOW JUSTICE MAY BE DONE.

"Mother, I am just discouraged!"

"Do not say that, my son. Remember that a stout heart will always prevail. Dark hours come into the lives of all of us. We must learn to bear with adversity."

"But it is very hard, mother," said Tom Train, despondently. "We have hardly enough food in the house to last us another day, and I am out of a job."

Mrs. Train, widow and sufferer from many ills, felt even a tremor in her brave, true heart, and her soft, blue eyes moistened as they saw the despair upon her boy's face. It was not for herself that she cared (what mother ever did) but for her dear son, than whom the beautiful city of Montclair held not a better, nobler youth.

"It is hard," she reflected, with inward bitterness. It is hard that Tom should not have been left some small inheritance with which to start him in life. Oh, I care not for myself, for my days are but few in this world of sorrow, but I would that my brave, honest boy might prosper."

And thus her faithful, loving heart yearned for another's welfare, for another's prosperity with an unselfish love—with never a thought for herself.

Ah! discouraged Tom Train. Little you realize how fortunate you really are in the possession of so true a friend, so faithful a comforter.

"Do you not think that an interview with Mr. Fair and a faithful explanation of all the circumstances will get you your job back again?"

"I fear not," replied handsome, athletic Tom Train, as he brushed and combed his black hair before a glass, which reflected a face perfect in contour and manly in expression. "You see, mother, old Berkeley Vincent is one of the directors of the road. Harvey Hale is his nephew, and, of course, old Vincent would influence Mr. Fair."

"It is unfortunate that you should have had trouble with Harvey Hale. He is a very high-tempered and evil young fellow."

"Well, you see the trouble was just this. Hale hates me because Edith Fair danced with me at the engineers' ball in preference to him. He regards me as a rival, for I think he is trying to catch Edith. But she just hates him, and I know it! Well, he has had it in for me ever since. He got square yesterday, I must admit. I was at my post on switch engine No. 4, and was side-tracking some cars in the yard, when young Hale came out. He wanted to go to the Y, and in an authoritative way jumped into the cab and ordered me to take him down.

"I told him respectfully that my engine was a switcher, and that Mr. Fair had ordered me to side-track those cars. I could not undertake to carry passengers. That made him mad, and he told me that if I didn't take him down to the Y he would have me discharged.

"I knew that there were cars blocking the main line. An express would be along in twenty minutes, and an accident was likely if they were not switched off. I tried to explain, but he insulted me by taking hold of the throttle and trying to start the engine.

"That roused my temper, and I grabbed him by the shoulder and hurled him to one side. He sprang upon me like a tiger. I had to defend myself, and I threw him out of the cab. One of his eyes was blackened with a blow from my fist, and he went away swearing vengeance. Just half an hour later old Vincent called me into the office and gave me my wages. I was discharged. I did not think that young Hale had any right to board my engine in the way he did."

"I cannot but see that you were in the right, my son," said Mrs. Train, sympathetically. "But it was unfortunate that you had trouble with Harvey Hale."

"He did it on purpose to gain my discharge," cried Tom. "I am sure of it. Oh, I am foolish to lose heart, mother dear, but I do not know where to look for another job. But I was thinking to-day of Uncle Allan. Is he not a very wealthy man?"

"I have heard that he is a millionaire, my son."

"And he disregarded your letters for assistance," said Tom bitterly. "To be sure, he is three thousand miles from here in San Francisco, but he should be large-hearted enough to remember his brother's wife with at least a kindly word. Stingy old curmudgeon!"

Tom indignantly arose and walked the floor. Mrs. Train made no rely, being busy with her cooking.

"I can't seem to realize that I've lost my job," he declared, moodily. "It was not right. I have not been used right."

"Indeed, Tom," said Mrs. Train, confidently, "I feel sure that you will get it back again. Mr. Fair is a noble-hearted man, and he will take you back I feel sure."

"If I was sure I'd go and see him," declared Tom.

"Go, by all means, my son. You will win, I feel sure."

"I will do it!" cried Tom, resolutely. "Mother, if I succeed I shall attribute it to your great luck and confidence."

Tom picked up his hat and started for the door. The next moment he was in the open air and hurrying toward the depot.

Tom Train was well known and a popular young fellow in Montclair. As he went on he met many acquaintances, and received pleasant nods right and left.

Very soon he came to the depot and reached the platform. It was his intention to go at once to Mr. Fair's office.

But just at that moment a train was entering the station, and an incident occurred which did much to alter the whole after tenor of Tom Train's life.

The train was an express, and was slowing speed. A group of ladies stood upon the platform engaged in conversation.

One of these had been accompanied by a little girl of some six years of age. The mother being engrossed in conversation, had not noticed the fact that her darling had wandered close to the platform's edge.

The child did not see the incoming train. Something on the track attracted her attention, and she sprang down and directly in the path of the iron horse.

A loud shriek of agony was heard. The mother had turned and seen the peril of her child. But it was impossible for her to reach it in time.

Every person in the depot saw the position of the child. Stout men stood stupefied and unable to act.

The engineer had jammed down his lever and tried to reverse his locomotive, but it could not be done in time.

Tom Train saw this all in a flash of time—in an infinitesimal second, as it were. To think was to act.

The spectators saw a lithe form cross the station platform, down between the rails he sprang, and the child was pushed from the track just in the nick of time. By the merest hairsbreadth, Tom Train escaped the pilot of the locomotive. But he escaped it, and fell in a heap just off the deadly rails.

A wild cheer burst from half a hundred throats. People rushed down to the spot in the wildest excitement.

Tom had gained his feet, and had picked the child up in his arms. In a moment more he had restored it to its frenzied mother.

"Good boy, Tom! Bravo!" were the cries which rewarded him, but Tom, with characteristic modesty, tried to push his way through the crowd and make his way to Mr. Fair's office.

But the crowd thickened.

"That was a brave act! He ought to be rewarded! Give him three cheers!"

These were the excited cries, but suddenly Tom felt a touch upon his shoulder, and turning, faced a short, genial-faced man, who had the appearance of a man of wealth and prominence.

"Tom Train, you are a hero. I saw you rescue that child, and you did well."

"Thank you, Mr. Fair," replied Tom, as he bowed before the railroad magnate, for he it was. "You do me too much honor."

"Not a bit of it, my lad," cried Mr. Fair, heartily. "You ought to have promotion for that. Where are you going?"

"Indeed, sir, I was just on my way to see you," replied Tom.

"To see me?"

"Yes."

"But why are you not on your engine? Are you ill?"

"No, sir," replied Tom bluntly. "I have been discharged."

"Discharged?"

Mr. Fair's face was the mirror of amazement.

"Yes, sir," replied Tom.

"But what is that for? Who dared to do that?"

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Fair," said a cringing voice at Mr. Fair's elbow. "I think you may hold me responsible, sir, and when you have learned the facts, you will indorse my action, I am sure."

It was Berkeley Vincent, the white-haired, cringing general manager of the road. Mr. Fair looked at him with astonishment.

"The deuce!" he exclaimed. "I would like to know what right you had to turn Tom Train off, Vincent? Explain it!"

"Certainly, sir," said Vincent, bowing servilely. "I took the liberty in your absence. It was a severe case, sir. The young scoundrel maliciously assaulted my nephew, Harvey Hale, who, you know, is one of your most trusted and valuable clerks, sir, and pounded him savagely. He blackened his eye, sir. Was not that provocation enough?"

Mr. Fair looked at Tom. Then he smiled in a comprehensive way and said:

"How did it happen, Tom?"

The boy engineer, reassured, replied:

"I was switching cars on the siding, sir, when Hale came down and demanded that I take him down to the Y. I told him that I was acting under your orders, and could not do it. He seized the throttle-valve, and was going to run the engine himself, when I took him by the shoulders and threw him off. I shouldn't wonder if I did black his eye."

Mr. Fair's eyes flashed.

"And you were discharged for that?" he cried. "Well, Vincent, you're a blockhead. Don't you see that Tom was doing his duty, and for Hale to meddle with him was a criminal offense? The track had to be cleared, and there might have been a collision if the express had come in. Any engineer on my road is justified in blacking both eyes of any senseless scamp who dares to board his engine and meddle with the throttle. Tom Train, it's a pity you didn't break his head. Go back to your post. I have full confidence in you. And, Vincent, warn your foolish nephew that if he dares to meddle with one of my engineers again he will be discharged."

Vincent slunk away, and Mr. Fair went to his office. It was a victory for Tom Train, but hatred, wrath, and vengeance were seething in the heart of Mr. Berkeley Vincent, and there was trouble ahead for the plucky boy engineer.

CHAPTER II.

OUT WITH A SPECIAL.

Tom went back to the switcher and resumed his duties. All that afternoon he worked hard. When he went home at night he met his mother at the door.

Mrs. Train knew from Tom's hopeful face that all was fixed right again. Her heart was gladdened.

"I'm all right, mother," cried Tom, joyfully. "Mr. Fair said I did right, and I have got my job back."

"I am so glad of that, Tom," said Mrs. Train, sincerely. "I knew that Mr. Fair would not be unjust with you."

"I was foolish to lose heart so easily," said Tom, and then he stopped. He saw by his mother's face that something unusual had occurred.

"I have received a letter from your Uncle Allan in San Francisco," replied Mrs. Train. "Here it is."

"A letter from Uncle Allan!" cried Tom, gayly. "He doesn't

say anything about helping us to a few thousands, does he? I suppose with his millions he would not feel it."

"You had better read the letter for an answer," said Mrs. Train.

Tom began at once to decipher the coarse, irregular handwriting. It took some time, but he finally managed to make out the following:

"Dear Mary.—I was glad to hear from my dear brother's wife, and am sorry that he left nothing for your boy to begin life with. But right here, dear woman, I would advise you not to send your boy to California to make his fortune. Times are hard here, things have changed. The gold fever has died out and everything is on the decline.

"Yes, I'm a pretty rich man, and my money don't do me much good. I'm so crippled with rheumatism that I can't enjoy life. Perhaps I may die. If I do I'll try and remember you in my will. With best regards to my dear dead brother's wife, I am, Allan Train."

Tom puckered his lips into a whistle after reading this most remarkable epistle.

"Well, I never!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "I should say Uncle Allan was the prince of cranks. Did you ever read such a queer letter and to a relative? Why, he isn't even civil —he doesn't ask you to write again. So he'll try and remember us in his will. Oh, I've no patience with such stingy old curmudgeons, mother, really, I haven't."

"Hush, my boy!" said Mrs. Train. "Don't talk that way. Perhaps the poor man means well."

"Oh, that's just like your soft heart, mother. Well, all right. I can and will make my own way in the world. At least I'll ask no more help of Uncle Allan."

Then Tom fell to eating his supper and the subject dropped.

The next morning Tom was at the roundhouse early. He had barely finished his duties in oiling when one of the office boys came in hastily and said:

"Tom Train, you're wanted in the office. Mr. Fair wants to see you."

"Ay, ay!" replied Tom, dropping his oiler and doffing his rough overalls. "I'll come right down."

Wondering not a little what Mr. Fair wished to see him about, Tom entered the magnate's office.

"Good-morning, Tom," said Mr. Fair, pleasantly. "Sit down."

Tom sank into a chair.

"I will be brief, my boy," said Mr. Fair, pleasantly. "I have a proposition to make to you."

"Very well, sir," replied Tom.

"Of course, you are a little young to put on the main line as yet, but I'm going to give you a trial. I have a party of friends from the East who want to go over the line to-day, and I want a special train. Now, I am going to let you take us out. You are familiar with the road, are you not?"

"Perfectly," replied Tom, eagerly. "When I was with old Joe Nichols I used to run the locomotive half the time."

"Very well. Now, I shall expect you to show some good speed good places. Bring your train up to the platform at ten o'clock."

"All right, sir," replied Tom. "What locomotive shall I take?"

"You might take Old Fifty."

Tom knew that this was the crack engine of the line. His brain whirled with the prospect. He bowed himself out as quickly as possible, and went at once down to the round-house.

There he met Wilson Cox, a broad-shouldered fellow, who was the stoker on Number Fifty.

"Hello, Tom Train!" cried Cox, in a friendly manner. "Glad to see ye. What's up now?"

"The old man has directed me to take out your locomotive," replied Tom.

The president or manager of a railroad is generally dubbed by the employees the "old man." No disrespect is ever intended, however, by this appellation.

Joe Haines, the erstwhile driver of Number Fifty, had been deposed from his position on account of defective eyesight. This had left the crack locomotive without a master.

There were many an old engineer on the line who would have liked to have stepped onto the cab of Number Fifty. Therefore Wilson Cox was not a little surprised when Tom presented himself thus.

"You?" exclaimed the genial stoker, in amazement. "Whew! you're a lucky boy, Tom Train. Why, there's many an old timer on this road would like Old Fifty."

"I doubt not," replied Tom. "But it is Mr. Fair's orders."

"Well, I'm mighty glad to have ye fer a partner, Tom. But I must own it's quite a promotion from a switcher up to the first engine on the line."

"Let there be no misunderstanding," said Tom. "I am not sure that I am to retain the position permanently. But Mr. Fair has directed me to have a special ready just as quickly as I can. If you will fire up, Wilson, we'll go down to the yard and get the president's car."

"All right, partner," cried Cox, springing into the cab. "I'll be ready in a jiffy."

With the long poker Cox raked out the fire and threw in great quantities of coal until the furnace roared.

Then Tom opened the throttle and ran the magnificent locomotive out into the siding. Down to the car-house he ran, and hitched onto the private car of Mr. Fair.

As Tom ran the special into the big depot he was justified in a thrill of pride. It seemed to him at that moment the prime ambition of his life to become the driver of such a fine engine as Old Fifty.

Mr. Fair came out of his office with four gentlemen of distinguished bearing. As he passed by the cab of the locomotive he looked up and nodded pleasantly to Tom.

Instructions had been given the operator to wire all stations ahead for a clear track. The morning express was to wait at Waybridge for the special to pass. Thus a clear track was believed to be assured.

At length the starting gong rang.

Tom opened the throttle, and the locomotive started ahead with an easy movement. Soon they were gliding swiftly over the switches, and in a short while the main track lay ahead, and Tom opened the throttle wide and let Old Fifty out for a fast run.

Like a bird of passage the mighty iron horse fled on over the steel rails. Up grade and down, around curves and over bridges, the special sped at lightning speed.

The novelty and the exhilaration of the moment were refreshing to Tom, who sat in the cab window and watched the track ahead.

It was a magnificent run that Old Fifty was making. Whatever success the locomotive's past drivers may have had with her, she was certainly behaving herself well with the new one.

Tom handled the crack locomotive like an old-timer, and Wilson Cox, who had been watching him narrowly, muttered:

"I reckin that's wonderful! He's sartinly a born engineer."

Station after station was passed, and Tom knew that he was nearing Waybridge.

It was at this station that the express was to be sidetracked. As there was no possibility of seeing the switch signal at Waybridge in time, owing to the long curve just

before the station was reached, Tom had been instructed to whistle for a clear track.

There was some little risk in the matter. The express might be a little late, but if she was on time and side-tracked at Waybridge, she would answer the whistle.

They were now barely two miles from Waybridge. The train was running a fortymile clip, and in a few seconds would be upon the long curve.

The track at this point was a heavy up-grade. Tom believed that a whistle could be heard at Waybridge, so he opened the valve.

The whistle signal was given sharp and clear. Two—three—ten—twenty seconds elapsed, and no answer came back. Tom exchanged a surprised glance with Cox.

"I don't believe the express is there yet," he cried.

"It don't look like it," replied Cox.

"If so they ought to answer."

Again Tom whistled, but again no answer came back. Tom's hand was upon the throttle-valve and the impulse was upon him to at once slacken speed.

But a swift thought came into his mind. He turned a pale face to Cox.

"It must be all right, Wilson," he declared. "Of course, the operator at Waybridge has been warned to side-track the express."

"Of course," replied Wilson Cox readily. "You see, Tom, we've got here ahead of the express, that is all."

If this was true Tom had no fears. He could go on to the station and wait for the express in safety.

He opened the throttle wider, to give the train more speed. An impulse caused him to once more give the alarm whistle.

They were now right on the curve. No sooner had they struck the curve than Tom heard the shriek of the replying whistle, and in that instant was nearly stricken down with horror as he saw the other locomotive appear at the top of the curve grade.

The engineer of the express, probably owing to the direction of the wind and the intervening hills, had not heard the previous whistles. Owing to some horrible mistake the express had not been side-tracked at Waybridge.

Tom, for a brief instant, was cold with horror. It was easy for him to see that the train could not be stopped at that distance. A collision was certain.

But Tom Train was not thinking of himself. The precious freight of human lives aboard the train, and for which he was responsible, was what troubled him the most. But all in that one flash of time he saw, thought, and acted.

"Cox!" he cried, swiftly, "back to the platform. Throw open the couplings. Separate the train from us! It is an up-grade! Save yourself!"

Tom's words rang like clarion notes in the fireman's brain. He obeyed, he knew not why.

Tom's hand was upon the whistle-valve. "Down brakes!" pealed out, and then there was a jarring, a swift shock, and the locomotive leaped ahead, leaving the train with parted couplings, and Tom, at his post, went on to meet the inevitable collision and give up his life in that moment to save others.

CHAPTER III.

THE RAILROAD WRECK.

Wilson Cox was a man of rare quickness of perception. He had divined Tom's meaning in the flash of a second and had acted instantly.

Back over the coal in the tender he sprang. Down he lowered himself, and now stood on the platform of the special car. Quick as a flash he threw back the coupling bar. The air-brake valves held a moment—just long enough to enable the brave fellow to spring back onto the tender.

As Tom had declared, it was an up-grade, and the moment the couplings parted the train sagged. In a flash there was a wide space between the special car and the locomotive.

The train lost momentum. Tom's gaze was turned backward, and not until some distance had been covered did he close the throttle.

Brave Tom Train! To save the lives of those on board his own train he seemed likely to sacrifice his own.

But to Tom's amazement he saw brave Wilson Cox coming down into the cab.

"Good God!" gasped Tom. "Why didn't you save your life, Wilson?"

"Do ye think I'd leave ye here to be killed alone?" returned the brave stoker. "If there's a smash, we'll go in together, Tom."

There was no time for more conversation. Down-grade came the express at full speed. One brief instant the startled engineer had been seen to close the throttle, and then the express was upon Old Fifty.

The latter locomotive had lost some of its momentum, but not enough to be able to reverse speed. The crash was a most terrific one.

In the twinkling of an eye, Old Fifty was reduced to a mass of wreckage, and the express was off the track, two cars were telescoped, and one of the worst railroad wrecks ever known on the M. N. & L. had happened.

Tom felt himself being hurled he knew not where. Then a stunning blow on the head made him insensible.

When he came to his head was supported by someone whom at first his filmy gaze did not recognize. But his eyes clearing, and aided by a familiar voice, he recognized Mr. Fair.

"Then you think he is not badly hurt, doctor?"

"Only stunned, sir. Apply the ammonia to the nostrils again. He will come to and be as bright as any of us in a few moments."

"Mr. Fair!" gasped Tom. "You are safe?"

"Safe!" cried the millionaire in a choking voice. "God bless you, brave Tom Train. I owe you my life."

"He is the pluckiest man I ever seen hold a throttle," said another, whom Tom now recognized as Wilson Cox. "An' I'm mighty glad he didn't pass in his chips."

"Wilson!" cried Tom. "Then you were not killed?"

"Not much," replied the brave stoker. "I fell into that bank of sand up there. I thought for a moment my neck was broken, but I'm all right now."

"But—but was nobody hurt?" asked Tom, rising to a sitting posture. But the question was answered as soon as he looked about him.

The wreck of the train lay in the ditch. Old Fifty had been utterly demolished. Tom understood that he had escaped by a miracle.

But the other locomotive had turned upon its side and was badly smashed. The engineer had been taken out dead, and the fireman was badly hurt.

One hundred passengers had been aboard the express. Of these, five had been killed outright, and nearly all had failed to escape without some serious bruises.

It was a frightful wreck, and would have been worse, but for the plucky act of Tom Train and Wilson Cox. No one was more sensible of this fact than Mr. Fair. The special car had been stopped by the conductor by setting a rear brake.

For the time being everybody was occupied with the care of

the wounded. Word had been sent to a town near, and a couple of doctors soon arrived.

Then a telegram from Waybridge brought a special relief train from Montclair. By this time Tom was able to walk about and make himself of use in caring for the injured.

The dead and wounded were placed aboard the relief train and sent back to Montclair.

In that city the excitement was most intense. A great crowd was at the station, and the bereaved ones were waiting for the bodies of their dead friends. Newspapers were already being hawked about the streets giving details of the wreck.

The account dwelt strongly on the pluck of Tom Train and his mate. In an instant Tom Train was made the hero of the hour.

But the question was now asked, who was to blame for the blunder in not holding the express over at Waybridge? As soon as the relief train had arrived Mr. Fair started and walked down to Waybridge.

Here he called the station agent there to severe account. The man, whose name was Bishop, expressed his horror at the result, and said:

"My God! I never dreamed of such a thing. I acted under orders."

"What!" thundered the railroad magnate. "Did you not get a message from Montclair to hold the express?"

"I did."

"Why—then how can you account for your culpable negligence?"

"I received a message a half hour later to countermand that order and to let the express go on."

Mr. Fair was thunderstruck. Bishop proved his statement by the operator and the paper upon which the message was received.

"Great heavens!" gasped the magnate. "Can it be possible that Vincent did not know better than to send such a message? Perhaps he did not send it. But if not, who did?"

Later in the day the track was cleared, and then Mr. Fair and Tom and Wilson Cox went back to Montclair on a special. A mighty crowd greeted them at the depot, and they were cheered like a band of conquering heroes.

Tom's face burned with the warmth of the reception. Certainly he was regarded as the hero of the hour.

Mr. Fair alighted from the train and went at once into the office. There was a grave expression upon his face as he met Berkeley Vincent at the door.

"Well, Mr. Fair, you don't know how relieved we were when we heard that you were safe," declared Vincent, suavely. "However did the affair happen? Didn't Bishop have sense enough to hold the express?"

"It was not Bishop's fault," cried Mr. Fair, sternly. "It was yours, sir!"

"Mine?" gasped Vincent, aghast.

"Yes, sir; the message countermanding the order to hold the express came from this office."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Fair," declared the operator, arising from his seat. "No such message has been sent from this office to-day."

"But I have seen the message. It was certainly received at Waybridge."

"Well, it never came from here," stoutly averred the operator. "I have not left this seat since you went away."

Mr. Fair knew that the operator was a young man of integrity. He spoke with the conviction of truth, as well.

"Well!" he exclaimed in amazement. "How in thunder is the thing to be explained?"

Silence reigned a moment.

"I think I have a theory, sir," declared the operator, finally. "The special had not been gone long when I tried to call up Middleton, the first station. The wire would not work."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Fair, with a start.

"After a time, however, it worked all right."

Mr. Fair arose and crossed the room to the ticker. He sounded the key, and then said, in a terse voice.

"Did you think that the wire might have been tapped at about that time?"

"It occurred to me that it might have been tapped between here and Middleton," replied the operator.

Mr. Fair took a sweeping view of the office.

"Where is Harvey Hale?" he asked, sharply.

"My nephew asked for a day off," replied Berkeley Vincent quickly and nervously. "He was a trifle indisposed."

Mr. Fair went to his desk and seated himself in his revolving-chair. He was silent a moment, and then in a constrained voice said:

"I have only to say that somebody is guilty of a most heinous crime. Whoever tapped that wire evidently wished to terminate the existence of someone who had incurred his hatred and who was aboard one or the other of those trains. I have only to say further that, if I spend every dollar of the road's money, this affair is going to be sifted to the bottom, and the murderer shall be punished."

Berkeley Vincent went to his desk. No comment was made further by any in the office and the matter was dropped.

But Vincent's face was deadly pale. He knew full well what import there was in Mr. Fair's words.

A few moments later Mr. Fair went out to take dinner. It was in the edge of the evening, and just as he reached the sidewalk a carriage drove up.

A beautiful young girl, pale and distraught, leaped out. In a moment she was in Mr. Fair's arms.

"Oh, papa!" cried Edith Fair, for she it was. "I am so glad you are safe. Oh, you cannot know how overcome I was when they told me of the accident not ten minutes ago. I at once had James drive me hither to make sure with my own eyes that you were not hurt."

"My dear daughter," replied Mr. Fair, embracing her. "God spared my life. Through the bravery of Tom Train I escaped injury."

"Tom Train is a noble fellow," cried Edith, with sparkling eyes. "I hope you will promote him, father."

"I certainly will," replied the millionaire, warmly.

After some further talk, Edith returned to her carriage and was driven home, Mr. Fair agreeing to come later. After partaking of dinner at a restaurant near, he returned to the office. He was followed in by two men, one of whom displayed a star upon his breast.

"I am Detective Mason," he said briefly. "I have a warrant sworn out by passengers aboard the wrecked train for the arrest of Lucius Lamont, your telegraph operator."

Lucius Lamont, the operator whom Mr. Fair had placed implicit confidence in, gave a gasping cry and fell forward in a faint. It was an exciting moment.

CHAPTER IV.

COMMITTED WITHOUT BAIL.

At this same moment Tom Train had entered the office by another door and saw the occurrence. Tom knew Lamont well, and regarded him as a warm friend and an honest fellow.

"He has fainted!" exclaimed Mr. Fair. Then Tom sprang past him and dashed some cold water in Lamont's face. The operator revived.

"Oh, God!" he exclaimed, staggering to his feet. "You do not mean to arrest me? I am an innocent man."

"We cannot help that," said the detective, in a voice of steel. "We must do our duty. You are my prisoner."

The man of law slipped manacles upon Lamont's wrists.

"God help my poor aged mother," said Lamont, brokenly. "This disgrace will kill her. I care not for myself, gentlemen."

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Fair, quietly, "I do not think Mr. Lamont is guilty. Is there not some mistake?"

"No, sir," replied the detective, shortly. "The warrant was sworn out by several of the passengers on that train. They believe that nobody else could have sent that second message."

"You may rest assured Lucius Lamont never sent that fatal message!" cried Tom, in a ringing voice.

"Perhaps you can tell who did?" sneered the detective.

"I will not rest until I have ferreted the miscreant out," declared Tom, boldly. "Be brave, Lucius. You are innocent and we will clear you. Mr. Fair does not believe you guilty."

"No," declared the magnate. "I wish to give bail for Mr. Lamont."

"You will have to see the justice about that," said the detective.

"All right!" cried Mr. Fair. "Call my carriage. I will go to Justice Gray and give bonds for this young man's release."

All this while Berkeley Vincent had remained speechless at his desk. Poor Lamont was led from the room. When he had gone Vincent turned and said harshly:

"I hope you don't believe that cock-and-bull story about the wires being tapped? I tell you Lamont is guilty."

"There is a difference of opinion on that subject," retorted Mr. Fair, dryly. "I can promise you one thing, Vincent, this matter is going to be probed to the very bottom, and the evil-doer shall suffer."

A dangerous light shone in Berkeley Vincent's hard gray eyes. His brow contracted into a savage frown, and he muttered under his breath ominously:

"We shall see about that."

Mr. Fair passed from the office now, as his carriage had arrived, and from the depot he was driven to the court of Justice Gray.

Lucius Lamont had been incarcerated in a cell at the police station. As Mr. Fair entered he saw the unfortunate operator behind the bars.

"Oh, Mr. Fair," said Lucius, brokenly, "will you do me the favor to see my poor mother and tell her I am innocent? Before God, it is the truth!"

"Lamont," said Mr. Fair, firmly, "have no fears. I do not believe you guilty, and I will see your mother as you request. I will also see that she is well cared for until I can procure bail for you. But perhaps I can secure your immediate release."

"Thank you, sir," replied Lamont, tearfully. "Oh, you are a kind and good man, Mr. Fair. Believe me, that rascal Harvey Hale is at the bottom of all the trouble."

"We shall see."

Mr. Fair passed into the office of the police justice. The latter, a white-haired, patrician old man, sat at a desk, and near by stood the detective and the chief of police, both of whom had been giving the justice a story of the guilt of Lucius Lamont.

There was a shocked expression upon the face of the kindly Justice Gray as he listened to the fearful narrative of the operator's guilt.

He looked up, however, with a pleasant smile of welcome as Mr. Fair appeared, and offered his hand.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Fair," he said. "What a shocking affair this is. I presume you have come to make complaint against this miscreant?"

"If you mean Lucius Lamont," said Mr. Fair, decidedly, "I have come to offer bail for his release."

"What!" exclaimed the justice, in complete amazement.

"I trust that your honor will grant it."

"But—what does this mean?" exclaimed the police justice in bewilderment. "This man is an offender of the law—he has willfully wrecked a train on your railroad."

"But I do not believe that," said Mr. Fair, firmly. "Neither shall I believe it until satisfactory evidence is furnished."

"But the complaint is all in legal form, and well backed by presumably good evidence," said the justice.

"I don't care for that. Will you admit Mr. Lamont to bail? I am willing to give bonds to any amount."

The justice was silent for a moment. Then he re-read the charges against the prisoner.

"It is the most heinous offense under the law," he said, finally. "It is murder in the first degree if proved. Under these circumstances I have no right to accept any sum for bail. The prisoner must be held for trial without bonds."

"But——"

"Pardon me, Mr. Fair, I cannot exceed the limitations of the statute."

This was decisive, and Mr. Fair turned to the door.

"I believe this young man has been wronged," he said, in going. "At least I shall leave no stone unturned to learn the truth."

Returning to his carriage, Mr. Fair was driven to his home. As he entered he met Edith, his beautiful daughter, who at once threw her soft arms about his neck and greeted him warmly.

"Oh, papa!" she exclaimed. "You don't know how glad I am that harm did not overtake you in that terrible accident. And it was all owing to Tom Train. Is he not a real hero?"

"Tom Train is a noble young man," declared Mr. Fair. "I owe my life to his bravery. But, alas! an innocent young man has been charged with the crime of wrecking the train, and I fear will be made to suffer for it."

"What do you mean?" asked Edith, in deep surprise.

Mr. Fair recited the episode of Lamont's arrest in the office. Edith listened with horror.

"Impossible!" she cried, stamping her little foot. "Lucius Lamont is one of the nicest young men in Montclair. He would never do such a thing. It is not true."

Her gloriously beautiful eyes flashed and her face flushed with the excitement of the moment.

Surely Lucius Lamont had one fearless and lovely champion.

"I quite agree with you, my daughter," declared Mr. Fair. "Yet the fact remains that Lucius has been arrested, and is held for trial."

"It is a villainous scheme!" asserted Edith, positively. "You speak of the likelihood of someone tapping the wires. I believe that is a correct explanation."

"So do I," agreed Mr. Fair. "Well, detectives are upon the case, and I hope we shall soon learn who the guilty party is."

"Have you any suspicion?" asked Edith, looking at her father searchingly.

The magnate was silent a moment. Then he made reply:

"Some singular premonition has led me to think of Harvey Hale."

"And I have thought the same," declared Edith, with conviction. "I believe Berkeley Vincent's nephew to be a young rascal."

"Yet it would be a serious thing for a young man like him to be found guilty of."

"True, yet he seems the only one who had provocation."

"Ah! what do you think it was?"

"Plainly his hatred for Tom Train. A despicable motive of revenge for the thrashing Tom gave him."

"I distrust Harvey Hale," said Mr. Fair, firmly. "I am decided to discharge him at once. I am surprised to think that Vincent should defend the graceless young scamp."

Edith looked penetratingly at her father.

She was a girl of more than ordinary powers of penetration. Father and daughter were deep in each other's confidence, and Edith was deeply interested and well conversant with Mr. Fair's business.

"Father," she said, impressively, "I cannot make up my mind to put trust in that man, Berkeley Vincent. He is to me a cold, slimy serpent. I distrust him."

Mr. Fair gave a violent start, and turned a shade paler.

"Tut, tut, child," he said, nervously. "We must not believe that. Thus far Vincent has professed to be the soul of honor."

Edith arose and drew herself up.

"Professed!" she exclaimed, with scathing emphasis. "That is well said. I have no faith in the man whatever."

Before Mr. Fair could speak further a servant entered with a card. As the magnate glanced at it he gave a violent start, and Edith looked astonished. The name upon the card was that of Harvey Hale.

"What does he want?" exclaimed the magnate in surprise. "This is very odd."

"Rather ask how does it happen that he has the bold face to come here," said Edith curtly. "But I presume it will be necessary for me to withdraw."

She made her exit by a side door, and a moment later the servant ushered the visitor in.

It was Harvey Hale, with a mock, cynical smile upon his thin lips, and a snaky glitter in his restless eyes.

Mr. Fair arose with dignity and stood awaiting his visitor's speech.

Hale bowed in a suave manner and said:

"I have called to see you upon an important matter, Mr. Fair. I will be brief. I have heard to my deep surprise and pain that you have intimated the possibility of my being connected with the railroad wreck. I have come to correct that impression."

"Ah!" said Mr. Fair, coldly.

"My uncle, Berkeley Vincent, has told me of your unkind suspicions."

"He must have overheard my talk with Tom Train," thought the railroad president. Then aloud:

"Proceed, sir!"

"I wish to say, sir, that as far as I can learn your theory is unjust and unfounded."

"You will acknowledge that you have a deadly hatred for Tom Train," said Mr. Fair.

"What has that to do with this matter?" asked the young villain.

"It furnishes a motive. To kill Tom Train you seek to wreck the train."

Lightning leaped from Hale's eyes.

"Take care! Do not make an accusation you cannot prove," he declared.

"Time will tell whether it is proved or not," said Mr. Fair, coldly. "If this is all, pray excuse me. If not——"

"It is not all!" said Hale, in a manner of insinuation. "I wish to inform you now that your accusation is utterly false, and I have the necessary proof in my possession. I can prove an alibi. Is not that sufficient?"

"I have nothing further to say on the subject," said Mr. Fair, frigidly. "Pray leave me."

Hale bowed and turned to the door. But the magnate, with sudden thought, said:

"One moment, Hale."

"Well, sir?"

"I have found a man to take your place in the office after to-day."

Hale's face turned black as night.

"What!" he exclaimed, in astonishment and anger. "You mean to discharge me?"

"That is it, exactly."

"But—upon what grounds?"

"We will not discuss this matter further. From this moment you are no longer in the employ of my railroad."

Hale stood for a moment quivering like an aspen. There was a positively murderous light in his eyes, and he bent forward and hissed in Mr. Fair's ear:

"Bah! you cannot displace me so easily. You could not discharge my uncle, Berkeley Vincent, and you dare not discharge me. You know well the reason why."

CHAPTER V.

A VILLAIN'S INSULTS.

Mr. Fair started as though stabbed with a knife. There was a significance in the villain's words which he well understood, and which caused him to turn deadly pale.

With an effort he exclaimed:

"W-what do you mean?"

Hale laughed sardonically.

"You know well enough what I mean," he said, coolly. "Uncle Berkeley is in that White Hill mining scheme, and if the stock goes up, all well and good. If it goes down—and Uncle Berkeley could put it down—what becomes of you and your road?"

Hale laughed scornfully and with insulting manner. Mr. Fair sat quite still, but in a state bordering upon the nightmare. He was faint and weak with horror.

"So you see, my dear sir," said Hale, with impudent emphasis, "it will hardly do for you to turn me off and displease Uncle Berkeley. It might not accrue to your advantage to do that. As for me, I am willing to bury the hatchet and say let us have peace."

Hale sat down in a chair, crossed his lathy legs and lit a cigarette.

There was a powerful and almost overwhelming sense of disgust and aversion seething in the railway magnate's breast for the young scoundrel.

He longed to exercise his just prerogative, and get up and beat the insulting miscreant out of his house.

But some motive he could not fathom held him in restraint.

Two years previous, Vincent, in whom Mr. Fair had reposed unlimited faith, had exerted his influence upon the magnate's generosity and induced him to furnish capital for the opening up of the White Hill mines.

Vincent had promised faithful repaying of the debt, and had been sanguine of a fortune in a very short time.

Mr. Fair had not even taken the trouble to look into the value of the mine, or its qualities. Time went on, and it was found that more capital was needed to develop the vast treasure there held in trust by nature.

Unsuspectingly Mr. Fair continued to indorse paper for Vincent. At last, however, he began to wax suspicious, and having to meet one protested note of large amount, he had a stormy interview with Vincent.

The latter swore good faith, and claimed that every one of his notes would be paid at maturity. In spite of this Mr. Fair had felt uneasy of late, for he was aghast upon investigation to discover that he had foolishly been led into signing

enough paper to actually place the M. N. & L. Railroad in the receiver's hands.

He had trusted to Vincent's honesty, and now a horrible suspicion had begun to prey upon him that it was all a villainous beat game of the manager of the railroad.

As it was, the words of Harvey Hale seemed to confirm these dread suspicions, and he realized with utter horror that he had foolishly placed himself wholly in the power of Vincent.

A cold sweat broke out upon him. Hale was too shrewd a villain not to fathom the emotions of the magnate and he was evilly triumphant thereat.

"If Mr. Vincent has imparted to you any of our private affairs," said Mr. Fair, sternly, "he has committed a breach of friendship."

"I have not specified the manner in which I obtained the news," said Hale, coolly. "But I am not a fool. Now, Mr. Fair, let us compromise. Let us be friends. I have a just and equitable proposition to make."

"A proposition!" said the magnate, vaguely.

"Yes, sir. Now I can work greatly to your advantage. I will stick to you through thick and thin. But I must ask that you grant me one favor. A year ago I asked you for Edith's hand. You refused then, in a very kindly manner, saying that Edith should judge for herself when she got older. She is older, and——"

Hale ceased speaking. He was even alarmed at the attitude now assumed by Mr. Fair.

The magnate's eyes literally blazed with fury. He arose and touched an electric button.

"Harvey Hale," he said in tones of bitter earnestness, "don't dare to insult me further, or I shall forget that I am a gentleman and horsewhip you. Never mention this subject—never darken my door again. I would see my daughter in her grave before I would consent to her marriage to you."

At this moment the servant appeared.

"Show this man the door."

Hale rose politely, and with a sardonic smile, the attitude of the victor, he said, quietly:

"The next time we discuss this subject I hope to find you in a more reasoning frame of mind, sir. Good-day."

The door closed behind him. Mr. Fair stood like a statue for a moment, and then, with wrath-hued face and shaking voice, said:

"My God! what have I done? Unless Vincent pays those notes, unless the stock he has floated yields large returns, I am a ruined man. Ruined! my God! ruined by my own simplicity and folly!"

With a deep groan he sat down to the desk and took from one of the pigeon-holes various papers. Over these he pored.

Darkness came and found him still there. The evening passed and he did not arise. To an inquiring servant he replied that he would do without dinner.

Midnight came, and it was near the dark hours of morning when he at length quit the desk to snatch a brief spell of slumber.

As he passed from the library his features as reflected in a mirror were haggard and wan, and showed suffering of mind.

James Fair, the millionaire, and owner of the M. N. & L., was truly confronted with the hideous and frightful possibility of financial ruin. It was not a position conducive to peace of mind or happiness. The same affliction has driven men mad. It had left an indelible imprint upon both the mind and physique of the philanthropic millionaire.

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Upon leaving the room Edith Fair had gone at once to her chamber. There her maid awaited her, and she began making her toilet for an evening out at the theater.

Later she went down to dinner. When the servant informed her that her father was busy in the library and would not come down, she did not give the matter particular notice, for the magnate had often remained away from dinner upon the same excuse.

A couple of hours later she was dressed for the play and the carriage was at the door.

Edith always went to the theater unattended, going and coming in her own carriage. Gentlemen escorts were plenty, but she was not given to indulgence.

Rather an eccentric idea some lady reader may say, but certainly Edith was mistress of her own desires, and none had right to complain.

As the daughter of the richest man in Montclair, any eccentricity would be sure to pass notice as correct enough, for nobody would ever think of such a thing as criticising Miss Edith Fair.

As Edith stepped into the carriage she imagined that James, the coachman, acted a little queer.

He was a faithful enough man, but sometimes given to drink. However, she made no comment, and was driven to the theater.

She enjoyed the play, and after it was finished waited for James to appear and escort her to the carriage.

The people all filed out, and soon she was the only lady left in the lobby, and naturally felt uneasy and vexed at the delay.

Every moment seemed an age to her in her uneasy frame of mind. At length she descended to the door.

"Looking for somebody, lady?" asked a policeman.

"I am looking for James Mahone, my driver," she replied.

"What! Jimmie Mahone, what drives for Mr. Fair?"

"Yes."

"Sorry, mum, but the hosses got away from Jimmie, an' he's in the hospital this minute with a broken arm."

Edith was shocked with the news. James had been drunk then after all. But why had not someone else come after her? Perhaps they did not know of the smash-up at the house.

Here was a quandary. At that late hour it would be difficult to find a public carriage on the street.

Edith did not feel inclined to wait for one, either. She was a girl of pluck, and ready to cope with an emergency.

"It's not a very great ways home," she thought. "I can walk it and I will."

With her mind made up to this, she left the theater.

The streets were lonely and deserted. Even the night watchmen seemed off duty that night, and the street lamps were hardly able to dispel the dense gloom save in limited spaces.

As she walked on briskly, Edith could not help but feel a trifle nervous in spite of her bravery.

Any of the dark shadows might hold a lurking villain. She wore costly diamonds, and this was temptation enough.

But she kept on bravely. A chill swept over her, however, as she heard a footstep in her rear.

A tall form came up hastily behind her. She heard a low chuckle, and impressed with a sense of fear, she turned.

"What do you want?" she asked, sharply.

"Edith—Miss Fair," said a hoarse voice. "I am delighted. I will see you safely home, for I have a very important question to ask you."

It was Harvey Hale. Edith recoiled as from a serpent.

"Pardon me!" she said, coldly. "I require no escort."

"Nonsense!" laughed Hale. "It is not safe for you to travel at this late hour alone. I insist upon seeing you home."

"And I refuse your services," said Edith, bluntly. "Is not that enough?"

"But I insist."

The villain placed himself in her path. She made an effort

to pass, but he seized her by the shoulder and forced her back almost rudely.

"Villain! do you mean to insult me?"

"Easy, my pretty bird!" said Hale, insinuatingly. "It is useless for you to flutter. I must and will talk with you. I have seen your father, and I do not think that he or you will now dare to refuse to listen to my offer of marriage."

Edith was beside herself with a species of desperation, loathing, and aversion for this unscrupulous villain.

"Will you let me pass? I will scream for help. You shall suffer for this insult, Harvey Hale!"

"No, I will not let you pass," declared the villain, coolly. "I mean to conquer you, and I will do it!"

Edith was just about to scream for assistance, when it came.

A footstep sounded in her rear, and a lithe form sprang forward.

"Unhand the lady, you wretch!"

The next moment Harvey Hale went to the ground before a tremendous blow between the eyes.

For a moment he felt as if he had been kicked by a horse but he was quickly upon his feet, and drew a revolver.

CHAPTER VI.

TO SAVE HUMAN LIFE.

Murder was in the heart of Edith's cowardly persecutor. He had recognized her champion at once.

It was no other than Tom Train. One of the engineer brotherhood was seriously ill, and Tom had been taking his turn sitting up with him, which explained his presence on the street at this late hour. He was just making his way home when fate brought him to this spot just in time to champion the defenseless victim of Hale's importunities.

The revolver in Hale's hand might have ended the career of the young engineer then and there.

But fortunately Tom saw the move just in time.

Catching the gleam of the pistol barrel, he sprang forward and clutched the villain's wrist.

The weapon exploded, but the bullet was spent in air.

"Coward!" cried Tom in a ringing voice. "I've a mind to pound you to a jelly for this."

"Curse you, Tom Train!" gritted the villain. "I'll have your life for this!"

He broke loose, and dropping the revolver, made a rush at Tom, using his fists.

But the young engineer was an adept boxer and had muscles of steel.

It was only an easy matter for him to meet the villain half way, and with a few skillful parries he promptly knocked him down again.

This time Hale got upon his feet more slowly.

"Have you had enough?" replied Tom, sharply. "I'd advise you to get out of the way before an officer comes."

Hale realized that it would not be a pleasant thing to be found in his present position. A policeman's alarm was heard down the street. He did not tarry.

"I'll come square with you for this, Tom Train," he gritted, savagely. "This is not the end."

Then he slunk away into the gloom. Tom turned to Edith and lifted his hat.

"This is a surprise, Miss Fair," he said. "Surely that man was not acting as your escort?"

"No," replied Edith, indignantly. "He dared to insult me because I was alone and unprotected."

"What!" exclaimed Tom, in amazement. "Have you no escort? Surely, at this hour of the night, it is hardly safe for a young lady to be out alone."

"I know that, Tom," replied Edith, "but give me time, and I will explain."

Then she told of her experience at the theater.

Tom listened with interest.

"That was unfortunate, indeed," he said. "Perhaps you will accept of my humble services, Miss Edith?"

"With pleasure," replied the magnate's daughter. "I don't think I shall ever dare venture out alone again."

At that moment two officers came up. Tom explained to them that the young lady had been insulted by a villain, but did not give Hale's name.

Then, offering Edith his arm, they started homeward.

Now that the excitement was over, Edith's fears were quieted, and she enjoyed the walk home much.

She had always taken a deep interest in Tom Train, but until now had never been offered an opportunity to become well acquainted.

She was gratified with his gallantry and fine air of breeding, which was as natural to him as could be. She was bound to admit that she had never met a young man in her life whom she was so deeply interested in.

On the other hand, Tom was charmed with the magnate's beautiful daughter. When at last the house was reached, and she had gone from his sight, it seemed like the unwelcome dispelling of a beautiful dream.

He turned his steps homeward like one in a trance, and that night visions of Edith Fair mingled with his dreams.

Early the next morning Tom went down to the roundhouse and cleaned up his locomotive with the help of a couple of oilers.

Then he went down to the depot. Hardly had he struck the platform when Mr. Fair and the telegraph operator rushed out in wild excitement.

Mr. Fair's gaze lit upon Tom at once.

"Tom Train!" he gasped, "you are just the man I want. You can save the day. News has just been received that the dam at High Valley is just giving way. If it does and the inhabitants of Newton are not warned, they will be swept into eternity by the flood."

For a moment Tom Train stood spellbound. He knew that Newton was on the M. N. & L., but it was a small place, and the telegraph operator was only at his post at train hours. It would be an hour before word could be got to him, and then it might be too late.

He knew that the dam at High Valley held back a mighty lake, which sweeping through the valley, would engulf Newton completely.

The railroad for twenty miles ran through this valley.

Tom turned white as a sheet.

"My soul!" he gasped. "Do you mean for me to save them, Mr. Fair?"

"If you can. I know you will and can do it, Tom. You are the only man who can. Take the best locomotive—the track is clear—warn them in time if you can."

Tom needed no second bidding. He was but a few seconds in reaching the round-house.

A new engine had been purchased and numbered Fifty.

Number Fifty was puffing on the turn-table. He shouted to Wilson Cox, who was quick in following him into the cab.

The switches were thrown open, and Number Fifty hitched onto two cars, to hold her steady, and then Tom let her out for all she was worth.

Out of Montclair fled the train, and soon was upon the long grades flying toward Waybridge.

Just beyond Waybridge High Valley was reached. From the railroad track a good view of the dam at the upper end of

the valley could be had, by looking up to the right as the curve was turned which brought the train into the valley.

Tom saw that a large torrent of water was pouring down, and that the dam was every moment giving way.

Already as far as the eye could reach the water was rising above the railroad embankment.

No time was to be lost.

"Wilson," said Tom, turning to his brave stoker, "put on more coal. Let the furnace blow. We must have more steam."

"All right," responded the stoker, cheerily, as he seized his long poker and began raking the fire. "I reckon we'll have a close run, Tom."

"It looks like it," replied Tom, as he opened the throttle wider.

"But Fifty is good for it, you can bet your dollars," declared Cox.

"We'll make it or die," averred Tom, resolutely.

On fled the locomotive with increasing speed. Nothing could be seen of the rails as the water covered them.

A perfect cloud of spray was hurled many feet into the air by the locomotive prow and wheels. It was like driving through a rain-storm.

The waters were all about them, but Tom believed that they were outstripping the rapidly rising flood.

Every moment the flood was outstripped, and suddenly, topping a grade, Tom saw a dry track ahead, and ten miles distant was Newton.

Down the grade to Newton the train flew. Less than ten minutes made the run, and the locomotive drew up in the station.

A crowd of people were on the platform. The station agent was just coming from his office, astonished at the appearance of the special.

But Tom leaned out of the cab and shouted:

"Give the alarm! Run for your lives. The dam at High Valley is giving way and you will all be drowned."

"My God! You don't mean it!" cried the startled station agent.

"Yes, I do. Go, for your lives! Alarm the town. Go to the high land! Quick! You have not a moment to lose!"

In an instant all was a panic. Already the advance waters of the flood were seen coming down the track.

The alarm was quickly given. It spread like wildfire, and as Newton was a small town, in less time than it takes to tell it the houses were vacated, and people were fleeing for their lives to the bluffs.

Tom stood in the cab of the locomotive until he saw that the people were fairly safe. The advance waters were now two feet deep in the depot, and about the locomotive.

Tom had been loath to leave his engine, but now a cry from Wilson Cox caused him to spring forward and throw the throttle wide open.

Glancing back of the track a mighty wall of water, full fifty feet high, was seen; the roar of many thunders was heard. To be overtaken meant death.

But the locomotive was now flying ahead with fearful speed. The flood was close behind, and a neck and neck race was the order.

CHAPTER VII.

A HERO IN THE EYES OF ALL.

It is beyond the power of pen and tongue to describe the situation adequately. But never in his life before had Tom Train been brought to face more awful danger. Never before had he realized how fast a body of water could travel.

Indeed, when he saw the mighty wall swooping down, he had fancied it an easy matter and exciting sport to outrun it.

Ten miles beyond the track left the valley and struck a high up-grade.

The flood doubtless would go on down the valley.

If the train could reach this grade all would be safe. But it immediately became a serious question as to whether it would succeed in doing so or not.

The mighty wall of water was traveling very fast. Every moment it seemed likely to outstrip the train fleeing before it.

Down the grade flew the train, now flying like a bird on the straightaway, then slacking to gracefully round a curve. It was a master hand at the throttle, and there was no daring chance not accepted by Tom Train.

Surely engineer never had a more thrilling ride. Certain death was behind, uncertainty ahead.

It was a terrible sight to look back and see that mighty wall of water. Tom glanced back once, but after that he did not dare to trust himself to do it again. It was a sight to unnerve the stoutest man.

Wilson Cox, the brave fireman, was at his post, and until now had made no comment. But with a peculiar expression upon his face he glanced at the deadly pursuer, and then said, coolly:

"Close call, mate. I reckon we'll make time, though."

"We must!" said Tom Train, in a determined way. "We have got to beat it."

The young engineer crowded on more steam, and the locomotive flew like a bird along the steel rails. Now water was fully a foot deep beneath the driving wheels of the locomotive. But just ahead was the curve and the grade.

The curve was reached, and Number Fifty now felt the grade.

The valley here turned at an angle, and around this the flood went. To be sure, the train was not entirely free from the flood. The water was fully two feet deep all about the train.

But Tom knew that his life had been spared by a narrow and most fortunate chance. Up the grade shot the train, and soon was far beyond the volume of water and on dry rails.

Below, the flood thundered on down the valley. Of course, human life was certain to be lost, for there were stray dwellings below.

But Tom by his heroism had saved the people of Newton. This was enough to crown him with glory.

But now that the danger was past Tom's knees gave out, and he sank half fainting to the floor of the cab.

But Wilson Cox was by his side in a moment.

"What's the matter, Tom, my boy?" cried the faithful fireman, anxiously, as he threw his arms about the young engineer, supporting him.

"It is nothing—I shall be all right in a moment," said Tom, faintly. "Only the strain was a little too much. I——"

But Cox sprang to a cooler in the tender and brought a dipper of water. This he moistened the young engineer's lips with, and it revived Tom very much.

"Thank you very much, Wilson," said Tom, gratefully, as he got upon his feet. "It is very kind of you. I am all right now."

"Waal," said the bluff fireman, sententiously, "I have fired with many a good man, but I'll say this to yer credit, Tom Train, that no man I ever fired with could have handled this locomotive better than you did on this trip, an' I doubt if they could have done it as well."

"I thank you, Wilson," said Tom gratefully. "I am afraid you do me too much credit."

"Not a bit of it, my hearty."

It was only an uncouth compliment from the lips of a common laboring man, yet Tom felt as deeply gratified as if it had been an encomium of praise from the highest possible source.

The train had been brought to a stop. From the position on the high grade, the waters of the flood could be seen surging down the valley.

But it could be seen that the flood was every moment subsiding.

In a short time the valley would be free of water. Then with a clear track the train could return to Montclair.

The waters subsided rapidly as the reservoir emptied itself. At length the rails of the track were uncovered, and Tom felt that it would be safe to start on the return.

Accordingly the engine was reversed, and the homeward trip was begun.

At places obstructions had been deposited upon the track in the shape of logs and debris.

But in each case Tom and Wilson succeeded in removing it by stopping the train and going forward with iron bars.

In this manner they reached Newton. The station platform, yet dripping with the waters of the flood, was crowded, and as the train came in it was greeted with cheers.

A great crowd surged about the locomotive cab, cheering Tom and his mate, and one man came forward with a purse of money.

But Tom would not take it, making a strenuous refusal.

"I thank you kindly just the same," he said modestly, "but I do not deserve it. I have simply done my duty—nothing more."

With this he opened the throttle and started for Montclair. The train rolled out of Newton amid much cheering, the cars being crowded with people who desired to take a run up to Montclair.

Between Newton and Waybridge a few obstructions were encountered which were easily removed.

Then a clear track lay ahead, and Tom let the locomotive out to a fast clip.

Of course word had been wired to Montclair from Newton of the success of Tom's relief trip. There was no doubt but that a large crowd would be in waiting when Montclair was reached.

Tom thought of this, and would gladly have avoided it, but there did not seem to be any way but to face the music.

The young engineer was not far wrong. When the train rolled into the depot at Montclair a most tremendous crowd were waiting to welcome him.

As soon as the train stopped a great crowd rushed to the cab.

"Hurrah for Tom Train! Three cheers for the boy engineer! Long live the young hero!"

The crowd cheered itself hoarse, and Tom was quite overcome. But Mr. Fair came to his rescue. The railroad magnate had the way cleared from the locomotive to the office, and there the magnate gripped Tom's hand with tears in his eyes, and cried:

"You are a real hero, Tom Train! You have done a noble deed!"

"I simply did my duty," declared Tom, modestly.

"You saved hundreds of human lives," declared Mr. Fair, earnestly. "You cannot reckon that as a light deed. The people know it, and I can assure you that they appreciate it."

"Indeed, it is nothing," protested Tom, stoutly. "I simply acted by your orders, Mr. Fair. Any man should have carried them out as well."

"But every man could not," declared the railway magnate.

The crowd outside finally dispersed. Tom washed and cleaned himself up in the engineer's room and then started for home.

But as he turned a corner a man of somewhat shabby appearance came up to him and clutched his arm.

The stranger gazed piercingly into Tom's face, and said:

"Is your name Tom Train?"

Tom gazed at the stranger a moment wonderingly. There was something in his face which seemed familiar.

"That's my name," he replied.

"You are just the person I have been looking for," declared the stranger. "I want to speak with you."

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGER TAKEN IN.

Tom could not help wondering what the stranger desired to speak to him about, but he simply replied:

"Very well, sir. What can I do for you?"

"You can do much," replied the shabby individual.

"I shall be glad to do all I can."

"Do you mean that?"

"Of course."

Again the man gave Tom that same penetrating glance.

"It's an honest face you've got!" he declared, "and I like it. Tom Train, I believe you have a heart."

"I hope so," replied Tom, pleasantly. "But please state your business. I am in a bit of a hurry——"

"Pardon me!" exclaimed the stranger with a start. "I will not detain you long. I wish to ask you a favor. Gaze upon my shabby clothes, and you will understand very quickly what I mean."

"Well, your clothes are not of the best," said Tom, with a smile; "but there is a very good way for you to get something better."

"How?"

"Get a job of work and earn them."

"That is what I am trying to do," replied the stranger, quickly. "But I am having hard luck. I can't seem to get work, and I haven't a penny to my name, nor nowhere to lay my head to-night."

"I am sorry for you," said Tom, kindly. "What can I do to help you?"

"First let me tell you who I am. I once did your father a great favor. I saved his life, and we were fast friends in California. My name is Jerry Bainbridge. I had plenty of money once, but I have been going down the ladder of late, and am strapped. But I felt sure that I could appeal to the son of my old friend. I am especially sure of it now that I have seen your face, for you are the image of your father."

Tom was deeply moved.

"That is enough," he cried, impulsively. "Any man who can claim that he was the old friend of my father when he was in life can claim anything from me. I am happy to serve you in any way I can, sir."

The stranger seemed the victim of some peculiar inward emotion.

"Spoken just like your father," he declared. "I knew you would not refuse to help me. You can see my needs."

"I can," replied Tom, and then he was thoughtful for a moment. Then, acting upon impulse, he cried:

"But enough. You say you have nowhere to sleep to-night Come with me. You look like an honest man, and I will trust you. My home is humble, but mother never turns away a needy person."

"What?" gasped the stranger. "You will take me to your own home?"

"If you can put up with sleeping on a cot in the attic. The house is small, and——"

"Don't speak of that!" cried Jerry Bainbridge. "I—I will sleep anywhere. Oh, I will repay you some day."

"As for work," continued Tom, "perhaps I can get Mr. Fair to give you a job as yard hand. How would that do?"

"God bless you, lad," said Bainbridge, brokenly, "you are a noble son—the image of your father."

"So if you will come with me," said Tom, kindly, "I will try and make you comfortable. It is not far to my house."

Bainbridge followed the young engineer's lead.

They turned into another street, and soon Tom was at the door of his humble home. He opened the door and entered.

Passing through the cheerful sitting-room Tom passed into the kitchen.

Mrs. Train was engaged in cooking. As Tom entered she looked up with a glad cry.

"Oh, Tom, I am so glad you have come," she cried, and then paused at sight of the stranger.

"This is Mr. Jerry Bainbridge, an old friend of father's," said Tom, in introduction. "Mr. Bainbridge, this is my mother."

"I am glad to meet Mrs. Train," said Bainbridge, with a bow quite courtly for such a shabby looking individual.

"I am glad to meet any old friend of my husband's," said Mrs. Train, with a pleasant smile.

"Mr. Bainbridge has been having hard luck," said Tom, explanatively. "He has no money and no friends. I am going to try and get him a job in the yard, and I have brought him home as our guest until he succeeds in getting work."

"He is very welcome," said the widow.

A choking sound came from Bainbridge's throat. He seemed to be laboring under some very strong emotion.

"My good, kind people," he said, brokenly, "I cannot express my thankfulness, but perhaps some day Jerry Bainbridge can repay you."

"Don't speak of that," cried Tom, cheerily. "Why, mother you've got supper all ready, haven't you? Sit right up, Mr. Bainbridge, and make yourself at home. Let me help you to some of the roast beef. I contend that nobody can beat mother's roast beef."

In this manner Bainbridge was quickly put at ease, and the meal passed very pleasantly.

The evening was spent in conversation, and the next morning Tom and Bainbridge together walked down to Mr. Fair's office.

As Tom entered he met Mr. Fair. The magnate greeted him pleasantly.

"I am glad to see you, Tom," he cried. "The track has been cleared, and you will be on hand to go out with the fast express?"

"I will," replied Tom, promptly. "But, Mr. Fair, I would ask a favor of you."

"Name it and it is yours," said the magnate.

"I have a poor man here who is needy and destitute. He was at one time a friend of my father's. He is looking for a job, and if there is a vacancy in the yard, I would like to speak for it in his behalf."

"Is that all you want, Tom?" cried Mr. Fair, cheerily. "Well, send him right down there. The yard boss sent up word not ten minutes ago that he wanted a new hand."

"Thank you, sir," replied Tom, joyfully.

"I can never repay you fully," said Bainbridge, in a whisper.

The latter gave his name to the clerk, and his rate of pay was fixed. Then he went to his work in the yard.

Before the day was over Tom had nearly forgotten the circumstances.

He went out with the fast express, and also took out a special later in the day. It was late in the evening when he returned, and he ran his locomotive down into the round-house.

Leaving Wilson Cox to bank the fires, Tom started for home.

But as he came out of the round-house he saw two dark forms slip behind a pile of planks at the lower end of the yard.

At once his interest was aroused.

"That's queer," he muttered. "I wonder if they are incendiaries or thieves?"

Determined to investigate, he started for the pile of lumber.

He approached it cautiously, and as he did so, he heard voices. He was thrilled with surprise as he recognized them as belonging to Berkeley Vincent and Harvey Hale.

Pressing close to the lumber pile, Tom heard a thrilling discussion.

Hale was speaking:

"I tell ye if ye ain't careful, Uncle Berk, they'll beat us yet. I've heard it said that Fair has been trying to get some Eastern capital to help him out."

"Curse him! he'll never do that!" gritted the voice of Vincent.

"But there's one man I'll get square with," went on Hale, "and that's Tom Train. He's turned the head of Edith so that she won't look at me now. I'll kill him for it."

"Will you?" thought Tom, with blood at boiling pitch.

And then, before either villain could speak again, a thrilling thing happened.

The pile of planks gave way, and Tom was precipitated at the very feet of the plotters.

"Curses! An eavesdropper!" shrieked Vincent.

"Kill him!" hissed Hale.

Like human wolves the two men sprang upon Tom. Beneath their attack he was crushed to the ground.

CHAPTER IX.

A MANIAC'S DEED.

That moment might have been Tom Train's last, but for an unlooked-for interference.

As Tom fell, a ray of light from the street lamp at the yard gate fell athwart his face. In an instant he was recognized by both villains.

"Tom Train!" hissed Vincent. "Make an end of him, Harvey. He has heard all."

Down upon Tom they pounced.

Of course, beneath their united weight, Tom was crushed to the ground. A knife gleamed in Hale's hand.

It would have fallen, and Harvey Hale in another instant would have been a murderer.

But from the gloom, like an arrow from a bow, came a sinewy form. A sharp voice cried:

"Hold! where you are!"

Strong fingers clutched the wrist of Hale, and wrenched the deadly knife from him. Vincent was hurled back, and Hale was sent tumbling some yards away.

Both villains sprang up and darted out of the yard.

They were out of sight in a moment. Tom regained his feet and stood face to face with his rescuer.

"Lad, I've done a little bit toward paying the debt I owed ye."

It was Jerry Bainbridge.

"Bainbridge!" gasped Tom, in amazement. "You have saved my life. But for you they would certainly have killed me."

"I reckon they would, my boy. But who are they?"

"Berkeley Vincent and Harvey Hale."

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Bainbridge, in surprise. "What are such men doing in this out-of-the-way place in such a sneaking manner?"

"That time will tell," said Tom, decisively. "It is my belief that they are traitors to Mr. Fair, and that they mean to ruin him if they can."

"You don't mean it."

"I know it."

Bainbridge seemed astounded.

"But you don't mean to stand by and see them do it?"

"No," replied Tom. "In some manner I must play them checkmate. There is a way to do it."

Bainbridge's manner seemed to change. He came nearer Tom and in a changed voice said:

"Boy, I'm onto this little game now as well as you. Hadn't we better hitch?"

"I agree with you," replied Tom.

"And we'll work together?"

"Yes."

"If there's any deviltry being carried out by those two we must spoil it. But why don't Fair discharge them?"

"I believe that there is a good reason why," replied Tom. "Vincent has some sort of a financial hold upon him, I have heard. Oh, I tremble for Mr. Fair."

"He seems a good man."

"He is."

"Then, lad," cried Bainbridge earnestly, "let us stand by him and beat these villains."

"We will do it," agreed Tom.

"Of course, we could have them arrested for this assault upon you to-night, but it would hardly be the best move for us to make."

"By no means," replied Tom. "The plan, in my opinion, is to lay low and wait for a better opportunity to show up their villainy. But, oh, if that planking hadn't tumbled over, I should have heard something of importance; I know I should."

"It is a pity that happened," agreed Bainbridge.

Together they left the yard and walked home. Tom had begun to conceive a great liking for Bainbridge, and had also discovered that he was something more than an ordinary man.

In spite of all, the young engineer could not help but marvel a trifle at the position in life of Bainbridge, who seemed a man gifted for something higher.

But the young engineer reflected that genius of the highest order is often in poverty, and forced to the most menial of occupations.

That night both sat up till a late hour talking over the situation and matters in general.

The more Tom talked with his new acquaintance the better he liked him.

Mrs. Train was not averse to taking a lodger, especially as Bainbridge was not particular about his room, and rather fancied the attic, so arrangements were at once made that he should lodge with the Trains.

The next morning Tom went down to the depot.

As he went into the office to report and get his schedule, Vincent was at his desk hard at work on his ledger.

The villain did not look up, nor did he seem cognizant of Tom's presence. The young engineer made no remarks and quickly passed out of the office.

A great crowd was upon the station platform.

On a side track near stood a spare locomotive. The cab was empty, the engineer being out with his long oil-can, oiling the bearings.

A train had just come in, and two asylum officials alighted, leading between them a maniac whose arms were tied with a rope.

The lunatic seemed quiet enough, and made no disturbance until near the door of the waiting-room.

Then, with a sudden, wild, eerie scream, he threw up his arms, having in some manner freed them. With a powerful blow he felled one of the asylum officials, and broke away from the other.

Instantly a terrible panic was created.

People shouted, women screamed, and fainted, and a great cry arose:

"Catch him! Don't let him escape!"

Men sprang in the maniac's path, but he hurled them aside like puppets. Straight across the station platform he ran.

The next moment he cleared the intervening tracks and reached the locomotive whose cab held no engineer. Too late the engineer with his oil-can sought to board his engine.

The maniac, now already in the cab, hurled an iron bar at him which knocked him down. The next moment the lunatic, who was certainly one familiar with the workings of a locomotive, opened the throttle and the engine ran out upon the main line.

As the engine began to disappear with increasing speed, Mr. Fair, in awful excitement, rushed down the platform.

"My God! he must be caught!" he cried. "What shall be done? The track is not clear, and the madman will go to the end of the route and death."

Tom Train until now had stood appalled and inactive. Now, however, he leaped forward and quickly undid the couplings of the train which had just come in.

"Come on!" he shouted. "Give me three or four men and I will catch the madman. Who will dare to go?"

A tremendous cheer went up from the crowd at this brave declaration.

CHAPTER X.

A WILD CHASE.

Men were not slow to respond to Tom Train's call. Mr. Fair was the first to board the locomotive with Tom.

"Hutchins," he said, to the regular engineer, "let Tom take the throttle. Stand firm all now," then he leaned out of the cab and shouted to the telegraph operator to wire Newton to make the inward track clear.

Three more men sprang into the cab. This made seven in all, and was as many as could with safety ride.

Tom opened the throttle and the locomotive glided out upon the inward track; out across the country they sped.

The M. N. & L. was a double track road. The locomotive upon which was the maniac was on the outward track. The plan of Tom Train was to beat the other engine and either derail it or in some manner stop it.

Out over the steel rails flew the pursuing locomotive.

The maniac had got quite a start, but it was hardly likely that he would understand so well how to get the speed out of the locomotive as Tom Train.

Consequently all had hopes, and with great excitement and interest watched the track ahead.

Like a bolt out of a gun the pursuing engine went flying out of Montclair. Soon they were clear of all switches and frogs and the long, level stretch of double tracks were before them.

Down a long grade they flew at a speed of more than a mile a minute. On and on like the wind.

A curve was ahead.

It was a mighty one also, and all engineers had been wont here to slow up. But Tom Train knew the desperation of the moment, and accepted the chance of running the curve at full speed.

And right here he performed a trick which showed him to be a skilled engineer.

Just before the curve was reached he partly closed the throttle and applied the air-brakes. It was only for an instant's duration, but it caught the curve at the right moment; the train took the sharp turn with a graceful motion, and once more bounded away upon the straight track.

Indeed, so cleverly was the feat performed that those in the cab could not help but show their appreciation of it by clapping their hands.

"Well done, Tom!"

"That was neatly taken."

"I thought sure we were going to leave the iron. That was well done!"

Tom's face flushed with pardonable pride, and he simply nodded his thanks modestly. Then attention was suddenly directed to a scene ahead.

A great cry went up:

"There she is. Not two miles ahead."

Making the curve had once more brought them to a good view of the straight, level track ahead. And there, not two miles ahead, as one of the men had shouted, was the runaway engine.

The interior of the cab, at that distance, could not be plainly seen, but the head of the maniac driver appeared frequently at the cab window, as he leaned out and wound his arms in the delirium of his madness.

"Now or never!" thought Tom, as he set his lips firmly and opened the throttle wider.

To their dying day none in the cab of that locomotive ever forgot that ride. It was a thrilling experience, and far beyond the power of pen to describe.

On, on, madder, swifter yet, flying with the speed of a tornado, down those glistening rails flew the pursuing engine.

The maniac engineer looked back and saw them coming.

His face and form could now be plainly seen.

The sight of his pursuer only seemed to increase the frenzy of the brute. He leaped and danced in wild delirium in the engine cab. He even ran out upon the coal in the tender and yelled derisively at his pursuer.

Then he was seen shoveling coal into the furnace. Certainly if a madman he had a method.

The wild engine began to increase its speed. In vain Tom had tried to overtake it on that stretch.

Just ahead was another curve. It was not so dangerous as the preceding one, yet there was mighty risk in taking it at that speed.

"We are lost!" groaned Mr. Fair. "We shall never make the curve, Tom!"

Tom Train made no reply, but set his lips firmly, and held the throttle-valve with steady hand.

The next moment the wild engine was upon the curve. The wheels sheered along the rails, the locomotive tottered, seemed nearly over, and then righted itself seemingly, and once more was on the straight track.

Tom Train partly closed the throttle and opened the brakes. For a brief second of time it seemed as if they must leave the iron. The air was radiant with sparks, caused by the mighty friction.

Then the locomotive righted itself, and went on again in pursuit.

Once more on the straight track, Tom was determined to overtake the maniac. They were nearing the town of Newton.

Small hamlets had gone by like a flash. Groups of startled people were seen for an instant upon station platforms.

Then all was a choatic thing of the past. On and on, still faster and faster they sped.

The grade was favorable for a fast run. The mere momentum carried the two engines along. Down this grade they could not gain a peg on the maniac.

But on the up-grade, to Tom's great joy, he saw that he was beginning to gain upon the maniac.

Slowly but surely the superiority of the pursuing locomotive was beginning to tell.

There was soon hardly one hundred yards between the two engines.

The actions of the maniac engineer could be plainly seen.

He held the throttle wide open, and now, seeing that his pursuer was gaining, he showed his teeth and hissed in a savage manner.

He leaped from one side of the cab to the other, and seemed to be considering in a subtle way some plan to outwit his foes.

A maniac's cunning is far past comprehension. A wild laugh, fiendish and blood-curdling, suddenly escaped his lips. Then a great cry of horror went up from those on board the pursuing engine.

The madman's plan was to derail his pursuer.

First he seized a heavy bar of iron and threw it upon the rails. Had the wheels of the locomotive struck it, a wreck could not have been averted.

For a moment the hearts of all stood still with horror.

There was not one in the party, even Tom himself, but was braced for the shock which they felt sure would follow; not one but expected to be hurled to death the next moment. It was an awful instant of time.

But the merest chance saved their lives. In some marvelous manner the cow-catcher caught the bar and hurled it into the air. When it fell it was plunged deeply into the soil beside the track.

A great groan of relief went up. But this was short-lived.

The maniac yelled in a baffled manner and began to throw out other articles. There were iron sledges and bars, and all manner of dangerous articles.

If one of these had lodged upon the rails and been struck by the locomotive, the result would have been death and destruction. It was a narrow escape.

But fortunately none did. Tom had realized the full weight of the exigency, and by dint of crowding on steam had brought his locomotive now head and head with the other.

There was only ten feet now between the floors of the two cabs. The maniac was trying to crowd on more steam.

One of the men in the pursuing engine's cab had a revolver, and was going to fire upon the maniac, as the safest and surest way of stopping the wild engine.

But Tom Train sprang forward and grasped his arm, saying:

"No, no! Don't shoot!"

CHAPTER XI.

A FIGHT WITH A MANIAC.

Tom Train could not bear the thought of taking the life of the irresponsible wretch aboard the wild engine.

To him it looked like murder, and in a certain sense he was right. Neither did he believe it necessary.

"But how will you stop the runaway?" asked the man with the revolver.

"We must go aboard the other engine," replied Tom.

"Go aboard her?"

"Yes. Who will go?"

All were silent. Tom saw not one whose face showed any inclination to attempt the feat.

Mr. Fair was too old a man. The others were in fear.

It required but a glance for Tom to see this, and it filled him with impatience. He waited but a moment.

"Well," he cried sharply, "will anybody go?"

"It can't be done," said one man.

"It's too risky."

"Shoot the cuss!"

"He's better out of the world than in it, anyway."

The man with the revolver cocked it. But Tom turned to Hutchins, the engineer, and said tersely:

"Here, Hutchins, take the throttle. Now the man who attempts to shoot that irresponsible wretch over there does it at his peril."

"Oh, no, by all means do not shoot him!" cried Mr. Fair. "There must be some other way of conquering him."

"There is!" cried Tom. "Somebody must go into the cab and down him."

"That is risky."

"Perhaps you'll do it yourself," said one of the men, with a sneer.

"Yes!" cried Tom Train, throwing off his coat, "I will do it myself as long as you're such a set of cowards."

Before anybody could make a move to restrain him the plucky young engineer swung himself out of the cab, and at a favorable moment made the leap.

He caught the frame of the cab with one hand, for a moment wavered, and seemed likely to be dashed into eternity. But he clung with all his strength, recovered his balance, and the next moment went into the cab.

The madman turned and saw him. The expression of awful fury upon the maniac's face Tom had never seen the like of before, nor did he ever forget it.

With a wild yell, the madman seized an iron bolt and hurled it at the invader.

Tom dodged just in time, and the next instant the maniac like a wild beast, was upon him.

The wonderful, almost supernatural strength of the maniac is well known. Tom suddenly found himself outmatched.

He was utterly unable to bear up against the strength of the madman. Forced back against the side of the cab, he was held as in a vise.

The maniac's face was close to his, his fetid breath fanned his cheeks, and his foam-flecked mouth, with its glistening row of strong, white teeth was close to his cheek, and for a moment Tom feared that he was going to be bitten.

But the maniac laughed and shrieked in wildest glee.

"Ah, see them dance!" shrieked the unfortunate creature. "See the little blue devils laughing at us. They say throw him in the fire, and I must obey—I must obey. Ha, ha, ha! how he'll burn—how he'll sizzle and burn!"

Tom, with horror, saw the purpose of his antagonist. The mouth of the furnace, hot and fiery, was near.

Toward this the maniac essayed to drag him. And his strength was something terrific. In fact, Tom seemed a helpless puppet in his grasp.

The young engineer had faced danger many times. His nerves were of steel, but they came near failing him now.

The awful horror of the moment was upon him.

It seemed as if he had not the power to avert his fate. Nearer the awful furnace the fiend dragged him.

It was certainly his purpose to cast him into it. Slowly but surely Tom was dragged toward it.

He exerted every atom of strength he could muster. Yet it was of no avail. It could not bear up against that of his foe.

And the madman laughed with demoniac glee.

"See him burn!" he shrieked. "How he'll sizzle and burn. Ha, ha, ha!"

"My soul!" thought Tom, with a thrill of despair. "What am I going to do?"

Help from his companions in the cab of the other locomotive was out of the question. Indeed, under Hutchins' guidance the pursuing engine had fallen back fully fifty yards in the rear, so that the fight between Tom and the maniac could hardly be seen.

The young engineer knew that he could depend only upon his own strength and wits. Finding his strength inadequate he began to work his brain for a stratagem.

And an idea came to him quick as a flash.

The huge iron doors of the furnace of course were open. Quick as lightning he let one foot slide out and kicked them shut.

Then he was forced, not into the furnace but against the closed doors. By a bit of strategy he had saved his life.

The maniac, baffled, was furious beyond description. He made a wild effort to open the furnace again, but Tom successfully fought him back.

The young engineer was now near all the valves of the engine.

Quick as thought he reached up and pulled the safety valve shut. In an instant the speed of the locomotive decreased, and it began to come to a quick stop. Its momentum alone carried it along.

If Tom could have applied the air-brakes now the locomotive would have stopped more quickly. But the other locomotive now had overtaken and was dashing by them.

A glimpse of the scene in the cab was given Mr. Fair and the others as they passed.

They saw Tom yet struggling with the madman, and Mr. Fair cried excitedly:

"Stop her, Hutchins! Close the throttle and put on the brakes! We must go back to Tom's assistance!"

But the engineer was in a badly rattled condition, and by the time he had stopped his engine they were fully one hundred yards ahead of the other, which had now come to stop on a level track.

The distance was brief, and the time spent was short in reversing the engine and running back to the other locomotive. But it was an age to struggling Tom Train.

Twice he had been dragged from the furnace door. The maniac was straining every nerve to accomplish his purpose.

And Tom Train was saving his strength, hoping only to hold his own until his companions should come to his aid.

He fought bravely and skillfully. At length the maniac got a peculiar grip on the young engineer, and Tom was obliged to come to close quarters.

This was what he had been trying to avoid, but now that it was impossible to avoid it he determined to make a deseperate fight.

So he closed in quickly with his foe, clasping him around the waist with a grip like iron. In this manner he held him securely.

The madman tried to break the hold, and a terrific struggle followed.

Both went to the floor of the cab and rolled into the tender. Over and over they rolled, wrestling, panting, and exerting every nerve.

Neither for a time seemed to have the advantage. But in the struggle they suddenly went out of the cab, and fell heavily upon the ends of the sleepers below.

It happened that the locomotive had stopped upon the highest embankment of the whole line. Fully two hundred feet in steep descent was it, and below was a morass of quicksand and mire.

Down over the embankment the two rolled. The madman would not relax his hold, and Tom could not break away.

CHAPTER XII.

A MYSTERIOUS SHOT.

Down the steep with frightful speed like a rubber ball the two combatants went rolling. Tom knew the awful peril of falling into the quicksand below in the grip of this fiend, and tried to break his hold, but in vain.

Down they went, rolling with terrific speed.

But just at the bottom of the descent was a huge bowlder. As it chanced the maniac's head struck this, and the contest was ended.

Both were thrown apart, and Tom just narrowly averted going into the morass. He clutched a branch and saved himself.

The next moment the young engineer's friends came rushing down to his relief. But Tom, practically unhurt, was upon his feet quickly.

The joy of all to know that he was uninjured was great.

He came in for a great deal of praise, and Mr. Fair grasped his hand, saying:

"You are a hero, Tom Train. But for you the outcome of this affair might hrave been the loss of many lives."

Tom modestly thanked them, and then attention was directed to the injured maniac. A brief glance told the story. The unfortunate man was dead.

His body was carried up the embankment and placed in the locomotive cab. Then all clambered aboard, and the return trip was begun.

Tom Train ran one engine and Hutchins the other. Back to Newton they went. Here word was telegraphed to Montclair. and trains held over at Newton were given a clear track.

The run to Montclair was quickly made. When the depot was reached a cheering crowd met them.

The body of the madman was taken in charge by a coroner. The crowd dispersed.

Mr. Fair went back to the office, and Tom Train, with leave of absence until the next day, started to go home.

As he went out of the depot a man came quickly to his side. Tom gave him a quick glance.

It was Bainbridge.

"Tom Train," said the latter, with a peculiar tremor in his voice, "I've heard all about how you fought with that madman. It was brave work and I honor you for a plucky fellow."

"Thank you, Mr. Bainbridge," replied Tom, thrilled with pleasure at the compliment. "I am afraid you do me too much honor."

"Not a bit of it," replied the yard hand, warmly. "But I can tell you that I've not been idle since daybreak."

"Indeed!"

"Work in the yard is slack to-day, and the boss let me off. I've improved my time doing—what?"

"I cannot imagine."

"Shadowing this Harvey Hale."

Tom gave a sharp cry.

"Do you mean that?" he exclaimed, eagerly.

"I do."

"Well, what did you learn?"

"Enough to satisfy me that Hale is the worst young rascal in Montclair, and that he has foul intentions regarding Edith Fair."

Tom gave a mighty start. A faint and giddy feeling came over him. He clutched Bainbridge's arm, and with white face said excitedly:

"Do you mean that?"

"Every word of it."

"How did you learn it?"

"I followed him into a saloon and heard him negotiating with a villain in a plan to abduct Edith."

For a moment Tom could not speak. He leaned against a tree-box, faint and half sick. Finally he managed to say:

"Does Mr. Fair know?"

"I have not told him."

"Did you get all the particulars of the affair?"

"No; I could only hear indistinctly, but I gathered enough to make sure that was the game."

Tom began to pace up and down excitedly.

"The scoundrel!" he muttered, excitedly. "If he dares to touch her or say one word of insult to her, I will thrash him within an inch of his life. But something must be done. Edith must be warned at once."

Bainbridge chuckled, and, sidling nearer Tom, poked him in the ribs. Surprised, the young engineer turned about quickly.

"Ah, you young rascal, I can read you like a book," chuckled Bainbridge, with a knowing wink. "Aren't you a sly dog? I kind of suspected it from the first."

"What?" asked Tom, in wonderment.

"Why, that you are a little sweet on the president's daughter."

Tom's face turned crimson.

"Get out!" he ejaculated.

"But then, my boy, that is no discredit to you," said Bainbridge, more earnestly. "She's a pretty girl, and far better dead and buried than the wife of such a villain as that young Hale."

"Harvey Hale!" gritted Tom. "He is a scoundrel, and not fit to kiss the ground she walks upon. No, Mr. Bainbridge, you are wrong in your surmises regarding Miss Edith and myself. You must not forget that I am a poor engineer, and she is the daughter of a railroad president. There is quite a social gulf between Miss Edith and myself."

Bainbridge frowned and took a step nearer, saying impressively:

"Tut, tut, boy! Don't you ever say that. The Trains are among the best blood in this country. It can't be beat—blood, sir, blood, and it tells every time. The Fairs are no higher bred than the Trains."

"I know that my ancestry is good," replied Tom, with pardonable pride, "but the question to be discussed at once, Mr. Bainbridge, is as to how we can devise some plan to spoil Harvey Hale's plans."

"Leave that to me, my son," said Bainbridge, coolly. "I'm pretty much interested in affairs in this town just now. I'm a long-headed man, sir—quite long-headed, as you shall see."

Tom could not help but smile at the arrogance of the other but he thoroughly understood Bainbridge now as his warmest friend, and always to be trusted. He had begun to rely strongly upon his co-operation.

"Well, perhaps you'll suggest a plan of action, Mr. Bainbridge?" said Tom.

"Yes, but not here," replied Bainbridge. "Let us go to the house, my boy. There we can talk quite safely."

They soon turned into the little street leading to the home

of the Trains. Tom opened the front door, and let Bainbridge pass in first.

Then he was about to follow.

But a thrilling incident prevented his doing so. The sharp crack of a revolver rang out upon the air, and Bainbridge was just in time to catch Tom's falling form.

The young engineer was struck by the bullet coming from an unseen source.

CHAPTER XIII.

PLANS ARE LAID.

Our hero sank into Bainbridge's arms with the sharp report of the pistol.

The latter with horror cried:

"My God! He is shot!"

Then he lifted Tom bodily and carried him into the house. A sofa being near he laid him upon it.

Scarcely had he done so when Mrs. Train rushed in. With a scream of agony and fear she sank down beside Tom.

"Oh, my boy—my boy!" she cried. "They have killed you, my dear boy!"

"Be brave, madam," adjured Bainbridge. "It may not be a fatal wound."

"It is not," said Tom, suddenly arousing from his stupor and essaying to sit up. "I think the bullet grazed my side. The shock made me sick for a moment."

Quickly Bainbridge bared Tom's side. With relief it was seen to be but a flesh wound, having grazed one of the ribs.

Mrs. Train tenderly bandaged it and Tom quickly recovered. The wound was not serious enough to interfere with his going about.

"Oh, I am so glad that it was no worse," murmured Mrs. Train. "But who could have done it?"

"I can think of but one person," said Tom, exchanging glances with Bainbridge.

The latter had scoured the neighborhood and notified the police. But no clew to the would-be murderer was found.

However, now that Tom was recovered, the matter was dismissed, and while Mrs. Train went back to her duties, Bainbridge proceeded to unfold his plans regarding Harvey Hale's plot of abduction.

"You are well assured that it is a fact?"

"Certainly; I heard the whole scheme myself. I think the name of the ruffian who is to co-operate with Hale is Bill Blue."

"Bill Blue!" gasped Tom, "the most atrocious of scoundrels. A jail-bird and a murderer, who ought to be upon the gallows."

"A very good company for a young man of Hale's stamp."

"I should say so. I tell you, Bainbridge, we must take no chances and lose no time. If those villains really get Edith Fair into their clutches, the result will be serious indeed."

"It devolves upon us, then, to beat the villains," said Bainbridge, quietly.

"Yes."

"We will do it. I overheard Hale and Bill Blue talk over the affair. But unfortunately I could not learn the exact method of procedure they intended to adopt."

"That is too bad. But we must do the best we can. You have not spoken of this to Mr. Fair or warned Edith?"

"No."

"It might be well for us to do that. The peril is better averted than cured. It is easier to prevent the abduction of the girl than to rescue her afterwards."

"You are right."

"But you mentioned a plan?"

Bainbridge was thoughtful.

"Perhaps my plan may not be the best one," he said, after a while. "But it was mainly formed on the principle of getting hold of the villains and forcing them to surrender."

"Ah, you mean to apprehend them in the execution of their guilty deed?"

"Just so."

"I think it is an excellent idea. But in order to do that we must of course know just when they intend to strike the blow."

"Ah, there's the rub," said Bainbridge, in a perplexed way. "We have no means of knowing that. There seems to be but one thing for me to do, and that is to shadow the villains assiduously until I learn the whole thing."

"That is the wisest and best course," agreed Tom, "and while you are engaged in that it may be well perhaps not to say anything about the affair to Edith or her father."

"That was my idea."

"It is a good one. We will then let the matter rest where it is," said Tom, arising. "Now, I want to hear from you often, Bainbridge."

"You shall."

"And I think I can safely say that your job will be kept for you at the yard. When Mr. Fair knows what you have been doing while off duty, he cannot refuse to take you back again."

"All right," replied Bainbridge, with a peculiar twinkle of his eyes. "I hope the position will be kept."

"And now," continued Tom, arising with an air of weariness "I must ask you to excuse me. I am very tired and need sleep. Come to me a few hours later at the round-house."

Bainbridge went out and left the young engineer alone.

Tom lost no time in tumbling into bed. His experiences for the day were of an arduous kind, and had taxed his strength greatly.

He slept soundly until an early hour the next morning. Then he arose and dressed himself.

Mrs. Train had a steaming breakfast ready.

"My boy," said the mother, with an air of anxiety, "do you really think that Harvey Hale will attempt such a desperate thing as the abduction of Edith Fair?"

"I do not think, but I know it," replied Tom, decidedly. "Harvey Hale is a villain. There is nothing to which he will not stoop."

"Yet that is quite a serious step for him to take."

"I doubt not he would dare to take it. At least, I shall watch him carefully, and I feel confident that Bainbridge will do his share. To the last I shall remain the friend of Edith and Mr. Fair."

"May Heaven be with you, my son," declared his mother, fondly.

Tom kissed his mother, and then left the house.

He went directly to the railroad yard. But before he reached the gates he became impressed that all was not quite right there.

Knots of men were at corners of the streets, and gathered upon the curbstone. They were also yardmen and railroad employees, as Tom saw with surprise.

Several of these he recognized and in passing hailed them.

"What's the matter, Jim? What wrong, Joe? Why ain't you at work?"

"Why, haven't ye heard?" replied one of the men, in surprise. "There's no work for us jest now."

"No work!" gasped Tom. "What do you mean?"

"Why, our walking delegates served notice on Boss Fair, this mornin', that we must have a raise of ten per cent in wages or knock off work. He refused it, and here we are."

"A strike!" gasped Tom.

"That's jest it!"

"But—you were well paid before. What will you gain? You are foolish, boys. Go back to work."

"Not till we get orders," said one of the men, sullenly.

"Old Fair is a monopolist and don't want to give the working a chance," growled another.

Here was a peculiar state of affairs.

It was the first time that Tom Train had ever heard an employee say anything against Mr. Fair as a kind and generous man. It fired the young engineer.

"Mr. Fair is a good man, and he has always used you well!" he cried, with spirit. "It is shameful in you to treat him this way. If your demands are just he will accede to them. Go back to your work."

"How do you know all that?" sneered one of the men. "Are you Fair's confidential adviser? I thought ye was only an engineer."

"I know Mr. Fair well enough to know that," retorted Tom. "I believe in fair play."

"That's all we want."

"And you'll get it. Do the fair thing."

"Look here, Tom Train, ain't you jest as bad as ther rest on us? Ain't you on a strike, too?"

"Never!" cried Tom, with force. "I am used better than I deserve. I am not one of the strikers, depend on it."

At this one of the men stepped forward, and shaking his fist in Tom's face, cried:

"If ye say that ye're a liar!"

This was more than the young engineer could stand. He let drive with his right fist and knocked the fellow down.

Tom Train acted upon impulse. The fellow had insulted him, and the young engineer retaliated.

There was strength in Tom's arm, too, and the luckless villifier turned a complete back somersault. For a moment he was unable to get up.

But the strikers were in an ugly mood. There were six in the party, and they made a rush for Tom to avenge their comrade.

The young engineer saw that he was in for a tussle.

He was by no means anxious to participate in a street fight. But he could not very well back out now, and was obliged to defend himself.

The ruffians rushed upon him savagely.

"Kill the scab!"

"Knock his brains out!"

"Down him!"

These were the yells. Tom was in no position to retreat. He was obliged to stand his ground and fight.

Fear was not one of Tom's characteristics. Had the number of his foes been doubled he would not have flinched.

Fortunately, the only weapons used were the fists.

Tom was quite proficient in the art of boxing. He was light and supple, and extremely muscular.

The way he laid about him was a caution to fighters. Two of the assailants were knocked down in a twinkling, and the other four got hard blows.

But the strikers closed in upon Tom as fierce as tigers. He was borne back, and might have suffered great harm but for unlooked-for assistance at the moment.

"Stand off there, ye curs!" cried a stentorian voice. "Six or eight on one ain't fair play. Bear up, Tom Train, I'm here to help ye."

Tom with a thrill recognized the voice, and looking up, saw his mate, Wilson Cox.

The brave fireman had come up just in the nick of time.

In less time than it takes to tell it the mob of ruffianly yardmen were beaten off, and Tom was grasping Wilson's hand.

"Durn me, if I didn't come along jist about in time, didn't I, Tom?" cried the bluff stoker. "It did me good to get in at two or three of them puppies. But ye ain't hurt?"

"Not a bit," replied Tom. "Much obliged to you for the help, Wilson."

"Don't speak of it."

Then the stoker changed his manner and lowered his tone of voice:

"There's queer hocus pocus about this strike, Tom Train."

"Ah!" exclaimed the young engineer, with interest. "What is it, Wilson?"

"Ye never dreamed of such a thing yesterday, did ye?"

"No."

"Nor anybody else. Come, let's walk down into the yard."

Tom complied. They passed through the yard and out over the switches. Not a man was working anywhere. A train was making up, but the shifting and shackling was done by engineers and conductors.

"This is a fine state of affairs!" exclaimed Tom, in amazement. "What could have started it?"

Wilson winked his eye knowingly.

"Ah, that's the question," he replied. "I think I know all about it."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"There's only one man at the bottom of it, an' that man wants to ruin Mr. Fair. P'r'aps you know who I mean?"

"Not Berkeley Vincent?"

"That's jest it."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STRIKE.

Our hero was astounded at the statement made by Wilson Cox.

"You don't mean to say that Berkeley Vincent started that strike?"

"Well, if he didn't, nobody else did," averred Wilson.

"But—how could he do it?"

"Easy enough. Of course I can't exactly prove this as yet," replied the fireman. "But it is believed by these poor devils that the strike was ordered by the grand master of the Confederation of Yardmen. Of course they did not dare disobey."

"And it was not?"

"To the best of my belief the order which they supposed came from the master workman is a forgery."

"Great heavens!" gasped Tom. "If you have any kind of evidence of this you can break up the strike at once."""

"But I have not."

Tom was thoughtful a moment.

"How did Vincent start the strike?" he finally asked.

"He sent men around among the men—hired tools they were—to disaffect them. Then when he got matters all a-boiling, he caused this order from the so-called master workman to be issued."

"But what is his purpose in starting a strike?"

"Why, to hurt Fair, of course."

"You're right!" cried Tom, resolutely. "Something must be done at once. Come, let us see Mr. Fair, and tell him of our suspicions. Then we must in some way expose this rascally

trick of Vincent's. When the yardmen know of the trick the strike will break and they will go back to work."

"I'm with ye!" cried Cox.

Together they set out for the depot. But as they approached they were surprised to see a great crowd gathered about the building.

This consisted of the railroad employes and their friends, and they were in a state of great excitement.

They were being addressed by several overzealous orators, and every moment the fever was increasing.

Tom saw at a glance that something must be done at onec.

The crowd blocked the entrance to the depot, but Tom with a great effort forced a way through.

He reached the inner depot and rapped upon the door of the office. No answer came. Tom rapped again, and this time a clerk appeared at a small window in the door and said:

"Mr. Fair can see nobody, sir. Those are his orders."

"But he must," insisted Tom. "Tell him it is Tom Train."

"I will tell him."

The clerk disappeared. In a few moments he reappeared and the door was opened cautiously.

Tom and Wilson Cox entered.

"Mr. Fair will see you in his private office," he said.

Vincent was at his desk and scowled as Tom passed by. But the young engineer did not heed him.

Into Mr. Fair's office they passed. The magnate looked up and lines of care and anxiety could be seen upon his face.

"Have a chair, boys," he said, in a pleasant manner. "What can I do for you?"

"I am surprised to see affairs in this shape, Mr. Fair," said Tom, resolved to come at once to the point. "It seems to be a strike."

"Yes, and I can assure you it was a surprise to me," replied the magnate. "It was like a bolt from a clear sky. I had always supposed my employes well paid and well satisfied."

"At heart I think they are," replied Tom.

Mr. Fair gave a start.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Do you know what brought about the strike?" interrogated Tom.

"Some little disaffection; then an order from the master workman of the Yardmen's Society."

"No," said Tom, tersely. "I do not believe it was anything of the kind."

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Fair.

"I hope I am understood," said the young engineer, resolutely; "that order I have reason to believe never came from the master workman. It is a rank forgery."

Mr. Fair sank back in his chair literally overcome with this declaration.

CHAPTER XV.

UNDERHAND WORK.

For a few seconds Mr. Fair was too overcome to speak. When finally he recovered he reached forward and placed a hand upon Tom's shoulder.

In a hoarse, constrained voice he said:

"Have you any evidence of that, Tom Train?"

Tom turned to Wilson Cox.

"I have my information from Wilson," he said, briefly.

The stoker cleared his throat.

"All that I can swear to is that one of the best informed men in the yard told me that he knew that the order never came from headquarters. But he said he should say nothing about it, as the boys would like, of course, to get any increase of pay."

Mr. Fair drew a deep breath.

"What is the name of that man?" he asked.

"Simon Richards."

"I know him. Can you find him and bring him here?"

"I can," replied Cox, starting to arise to his feet.

"One moment," interrupted Mr. Fair. "Do you know of any outside influence brought to bear upon the men in order to create the strike?"

"I do," replied Cox.

"What did it consist of?"

"Money was paid certain men to my knowledge to create disaffection."

"Ah, do you know where this money came from?"

"I do not, positively, but Richards intimated that it came from a wealthy man, and that man was a supposed friend of yours."

The stoker did not speak the name, but Mr. Fair was gazing hard at him.

"Vincent!" he said, between set lips. "I can see the whole game now. Well, the crisis has come, and I may as well face it. You may go now, Cox. Do not fail to bring Richards here the quickest way."

"One thing more," said Cox, as he started for the door. "I would like to say, sir, that young Harvey Hale is making offers to bet large sums that Lucius Lamont will hang for the wrecking of that train. Pardon me, sir, if I am making too free, but I reckon as how you've not good friends about you, sir."

"Very well, Wilson," said Mr. Fair, "I can only thank you much for your interest."

The door closed behind Cox. Then Mr. Fair turned to Tom.

"Tom," he said, in the deepest of agitation, "I feel that you are true to me."

"You may be sure of it, Mr. Fair," said Tom, warmly.

"I am satisfied now that I have been warming in my bosom a nest of vipers," declared the magnate, with a groan. "Vincent is a traitor of the vilest sort. Tom, God help me, but I am upon the verge of ruin."

"Don't give up, sir," cried Tom, with flashing eyes. "You will turn the tables on them yet."

At this moment the door of the office door opened again, and Cox came in quickly with a short, square-shouldered and open-featured man.

This was Simon Richards. He removed his hat and stood before Mr. Fair. The magnate arose and extended his hand.

"I am glad to see you, Richards!" he said. "I presume Cox has told you what I have called you here for? Do you know positively that this strike was called by a forged order from the master workman?"

"I think I do, sir," said Richards.

"Who forged that order?"

"I do not know. As near as I can guess it was a man whom you know well, sir. I mean Mr. Berkeley Vincent, sir."

"The scoundrel!" gritted the magnate.

"But if you wish to make sure about the forged order, sir," continued Richards, "you can telegraph the secretary and get an answer in half an hour's time."

"You are right," cried Mr. Fair, with an inspiration. He went into an inner office and gave the order to an operator. The half hour passed slowly. The mob was yet raging about the outside of the depot. In less than twenty-five minutes the answer came. Thus it read:

"To Simon Richards.—No strike has been ordered at Montclair. No complaint from there.

"Secretary, Yardmen's Union."

Mr. Fair took the dispatch in his hands and said to the others:

"Come with me!"

Up winding stairs they went to a balcony which overhung the entrance to the depot. At this appearance of the railroad's president the crowd ceased its clamor.

Mr. Fair stepped to the rail, and looking down upon the assemblage, he said in firm, clear tones:

"Boys, as long as you have worked for me have you ever known me to refuse you a just demand or deny you a reasonable favor? Will you answer me that?"

A deep silence was upon the crowd. Then a score of voices answered:

"No."

"I thought so," continued Mr. Fair, with gratification. "Nor would I refuse you anything now that is just and fair."

"Then give us our wages," cried a voice.

"You get fair wages enough," replied the magnate, calmly. "All I can afford to pay you. I have one statement to make to you, after hearing which I am sure you will go back to your work. All of you no doubt believe that you were ordered to quit work by the master workman of your union."

"And so we were," was the reply.

"That is false. That order was a forgery. Here is a telegram from your secretary saying so. The strike is off. Go back to your work."

The effect of this statement upon the crowd was intense. Wild cries went up on the air, and several delegates rushed into the office. They were permitted to verify the telegram. The result was that with cheers the men dispersed to their work. The strike was off. It was a grand victory. Tom and Wilson Cox stood in Mr. Fair's private office. The magnate's face was very pale but resolute. He stepped to the door of the outer office and said, curtly:

"Vincent, I want to speak with you."

The manager left his chair with a bold front and marched into the private office.

Mr. Fair at once closed the door and the shutters at the window. He went methodically to his desk and arranged some papers.

Then he arose, and walking to the center of the room, faced Vincent.

"Berkeley Vincent!" he said in a stern voice, "the crisis has come, the mask is off, and now upon this spot you and I must have a settlement which will last forever."

Vincent was for an instant only discomposed. Then a weak smile dawned upon his cunning features.

"Just as you say, Jim Fair. I am ready and willing."

"It is well for you to say that!" cried the magnate, sternly. "I have evidence that you have been working against my best interests. You instigated this strike. You seek to ruin me. You are a false friend, a viper, and a scoundrel!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MASK OFF.

Mr. Fair's denunciation of the Villain, Berkeley Vincent, was of a singular sort.

His cunning gaze wavered and then roamed to the spot where the three men, Tom Train, Cox, and Richards stood.

"You called me in here on private business," he said, tersely; "then let those men leave the room."

"They will remain!" declared Mr. Fair, "and for a good purpose."

"Then I refuse to confer with you," said Vincent, moving toward the door.

"Stay where you are!" commanded the magnate, sternly. "I want a settlement with you now, Berkeley Vincent. There is no use for you to deny that you fostered this strike."

"Have you any proof of that?"

"I shall find it."

"Pshaw! that won't amount to anything. I can say that my interest in the yardmen alone influenced me to side with them. They are underpaid."

"That is not your motive at all," cried Mr. Fair, scathingly. "Your motive was to injure me. You know that every loss sustained by this road only weakens me financially. You are a rascal, Berkeley Vincent. I have trusted you too far, but you have not the best of the situation yet."

Vincent laughed sardonically.

"Well, call the mask off if you choose," he said, contemptuously. "I don't see wherein I am beholden to you, Jim Fair. If that stock is not redeemed next week, I mean those five thousand shares in the White Hill Mining Co., what will become of you and your railroad? Perhaps you can raise the money to redeem them, but I don't believe it."

With a groan Mr. Fair reeled back and seemed about to faint. But Tom sprang forward and supported him.

"Mr. Fair," he said, anxiously, "you are not able to bear this strain. Had you not better call your carriage and go home?"

"No," replied the magnate, with a powerful effort overcoming his faintness. "I am strong enough. It was only a momentary weakness."

Then he turned his gaze once more on Vincent.

"Villain!" he exclaimed, tersely. "I took you in when you were next to a pauper. I helped you practically out of the gutter, and this is the way you requite me. It was your rascality that led me into that White Hill scheme."

"I will admit that I informed you of the opportunity to invest in that mine," said Vincent, coolly, "but if you didn't think it would turn out well, you were a fool to invest in it."

"You have spoken rightly," cried Mr. Fair. "I have indeed been a fool to harbor such a viper as you. But I trusted you, and now I am reaping the reward of my folly."

"Am I to blame for your foolishness?" snapped Vincent.

Mr. Fair was staggered at the audacity and hardihood of the scoundrel.

"You are indeed a deep villain, Berkeley Vincent," he said, firmly. "I know that you have me in a hard place. But you have made well out of the deal. I have always used you well, and there is no reason why you should pinch me now."

"I only want what belongs to me," said Vincent, coolly.

"Listen to reason, Berkeley. If you are a man of fairness or honor, you will spare me. You can allow me more time—help me to get upon my feet. You were the cause of my downfall. Now why not help me to rise?"

"I believe the little obligation I once owed you is paid," said Vincent. "There is no reason why I should yield you charity."

Mr. Fair seemed for a moment likely to strike the villain for this insult. But he composed himself.

"I have learned," he said, penetratingly, "that you control all that stock of the White Hill's Co. which I do not own. In fact, you have the corner in it. The so-called proxies really are debtors of yours."

"You speak the truth."

"Then you are in a position to help me."

"If I choose."

"But you do not choose?"

"No."

"Which shows you as an ungrateful scoundrel."

"Thank you."

"If I do not raise half a million dollars to fill the gap in the depreciation of that stock, in seven days this railroad will go into a receiver's hands and I shall be a beggar. What will you do?"

Vincent laughed softly.

"Why, if the railroad goes into a receiver's hands its stock will go down, and it will be sold for a song. Of course, I shall buy it. Call me a rascal if you choose, Jim Fair, but you will give me credit for a skillful bit of financiering."

"Financiering!" gasped Mr. Fair, with indignation. "Why, it is robbery, base lying and deceit. Berkeley Vincent, that money will never do you any good!"

"I'll risk it."

Mr. Fair experienced a queer tremor. He was deadly pale, and was supported by Tom Train.

But suddenly new strength seemed to come to him.

He drew a deep breath, and released himself from Tom's hold. There was a forceful light in his eyes as he took a step toward Vincent.

"You have proved a traitor to me, Berkeley Vincent," he said scathingly. "But the end is not yet. You may be balked in your plans for all of your sharp tricks. If I can raise that half million dollars in time you will be shut out, the tables will be turned, and you will be in no position to ever gain a favor from me again."

"Which I do not ask," retorted Vincent, coolly. "But you never can raise that money. I do not fear it. However, if you did, it would only cheat me out of the railroad, that is all. I would have enough money then to retire on."

"Money obtained in such a manner becomes a curse," retorted Mr. Fair.

Then he took a stride to the door and unlatched it. Flinging it wide open he turned to Vincent and cried:

"At least for one week I am the master of this railroad. I have seven days of grace before you can step in and sweep all from me. During those seven days I mean to rule this place. I give you notice now, that you are discharged from the employ of this railroad. Here is the door. Get out this instant, or I will have you forcibly ejected."

It was a dramatic scene. Vincent stood for a moment like a statue.

Tom Train, Wilson Cox and Richards stood by.

They were ready at one word from Mr. Fair to execute his commands. Vincent read this in their faces.

He bowed his head and walked to the door. On the threshold he paused.

"Listen, Jim Fair," he hissed, with distorted face; "I go now by your ordeds, but I shall return in seven days, and I will have the happy privilege of kicking you out. He who laughs last always laughs best."

A moment later the villain's footsteps died out down the ridor.

Mr. Fair walked across the room. He turned and look at the three devoted and stanch friends at the door.

They were laboring men, it is true, but they were friends. Theirs was the true kind of friendship.

"Boys," he said, with a tremor in his voice, "I'm in a hard place just now. Whether I pull through or not, I shall never forget how you have stood by me."

In an instant Tom Train sprang forward.

He voiced the sentiments of all, as he cried:

"Mr. Fair, we know how you have been wronged, and we would die for you. To the end we'll stick by you."

A few moments later Mr. Fair was being driven home. Tom and Wilson Cox were on their way to the round-house.

But just as Tom entered the yard he saw a familiar form approaching. It was Bainbridge, and his manner was excited.

CHAPTER XVII.

VILLAINOUS PLANS.

After leaving Tom Train the night before, Bainbridge had proceeded at once to execute his plan of playing detective upon Hale.

Leaving Tom's house, he struck out into the business portion of Montclair.

He had informed himself of the usual localities where the villain Hale spent his evenings.

There were a number of dives and low saloons in Montclair, such as may be found in almost every Western city.

One of these had a sign over the door which read:

"THE SHADES HOUSE,
"Jerry Mulligan, Proprietor."

This was known as a quasi-gambling den and resort for blacklegs. It was incurring a risk for any respectable man to enter the place.

But Bainbridge was so zealous in his task that he did not hesitate long.

Pulling his slouch hat down over his eyes he passed into the place. A vast crowd were drinking at a long bar.

Passing by them carelessly, Bainbridge kept on to the lower end of the room. In another moment, with a well-feigned air of familiarity, he passed through a dark passage and came into a large, low-ceilinged apartment, which was a literal paradise for the gamblers.

Every sort of a game of chance was here displayed.

The faro bank, the roulette table, the wheel of fortune, dice, cards, and every conceivable form of gambling was here to be found.

And the votaries were as numerous, comparatively speaking, as the stars in the heavens. All were intent in their game, and flushed faces of luck alternated with the dejected countenances of the unlucky.

Bainbridge strolled carelessly into the den.

A keeper at the door eyed him for a moment suspiciously, but Bainbridge's very coolness carried him safely through.

But his eyes swept the room critically from end to end.

Every detail, every face was taken in turn, and he gave a start as he saw a dark youth at one of the tables playing cards, and alternating his play with savage oaths and execrations upon his luck.

It was Harvey Hale.

Bainbridge strolled nearer and quietly watched the game.

He took care to approach Hale from the rear. He stood and watched the play for some time.

The game was draw poker. A sleek, well-fed sport was raking in the pile at every turn, and Hale particularly was losing heavily.

The villain's passions would seem to preclude his winning, for he played excitedly and erratically.

Occasionally he won, but more often he dropped his stakes. Hundreds of dollars passed from his hands.

Bainbridge smiled grimly.

"Wonder where he gets his money?" he mused. "Perhaps his uncle supplies him. If he knew how it was going just now he might limit the young fellow's allowance."

At last a jack-pot was made. Hale drew three aces and a pair of kings. It was a good hand.

Upon it he went high. The money was literally piled upon the table, then at a favorable moment Hale called his opponent.

He threw down his hand.

"A full house!" he cried. "The pot is mine!"

He reached forward to scoop in the money. But the sleek gambler opposite interposed, saying blandly:

"I beg your pardon!"

Then he threw down upon the table four jacks. The game was his. Hale sat like one stupefied.

Then he sprang up.

"Curse the luck!" he gritted. "I'll play no more to-night The fates are against me and the fiend aids you."

As he arose the two other players also arose, leaving the sleek gambler alone.

They were coarse-looking, heavy-featured men, with a slouchy appearance. One would at once have adjudged them members of the burglarious profession.

Bainbridge discreetly retired to a safe distance.

The two dark-bearded men seemed intimate with Hale. All three went to the bar and drank.

Bainbridge watched them closely.

"I'll wager those are the chaps," he muttered. "Hale has them under his thumb. No doubt they will attempt the abduction. They will bear watching."

The three men spent some time at the bar. Bainbridge watched them closely all the while.

At length, engaged in earnest conversation, they made their way toward the street door. They were going to leave the place beyond doubt.

Fearful of losing track of them, Bainbridge followed them to the door rather closely.

They did not seem to notice him, and passed out into the street. The night was dark, and a west wind went soughing through the thoroughfare.

Keeping ever a discreet distance, Bainbridge followed the villains until a corner was reached.

Here they came to a halt and slunk into deep shadows. Bainbridge kept well in the shadows and crept nearer.

He could indistinctly hear their voices, and knew that they were holding an excited conference.

Just what this was he would give much to know. He was determined to learn if possible.

It was hazardous work creeping upon the three plotters.

They were sharp men all, and there was little doubt but that they were keeping a sharp lookout. But by dint of slow and careful work, Bainbridge reached the cover of a tobacconist's sign.

The villains were upon one side, and he was upon the other. He could hear every word spoken.

What followed was of the utmost value to him, and thrilled him deeply. Hale was speaking.

"Tain't that I care so much about the girl, boys, but I'd like to revenge myself on old Fair, and there ain't anything would make him feel worse than to abduct his daughter."

"Well, boss," said one of the ruffians, "tell us what to do and we'll do it."

"Then you'll agree to my terms?"

"Yes."

"One thousand dollars to fetch the girl safely out of the house and put her into the carriage I'll have waiting."

"Ye'll do the rest?"

"Yes."

"Then it's a bargain. Ter morrer night at twelve we'll be at the south gate to Fair's grounds. That's me, Jack Fisher."

"An' me, Clem Butler."

Bainbridge made a mental note of these names. Then the conversation continued.

"I reckon I can trust you?" said Hale.

"Yes, you bet. When we git the thousand from you we're going to make a shift fer Mexico—eh, Clem?"

"That's ther talk."

"Getting too warm for you around here, is it?" asked Hale with a laugh.

"Waal, jest a bit since Clem knifed that man on ther Red Bridge. But that settles it—does it, boss?"

"It does!" replied Hale.

The two villains without more ado slid away into the gloom. Hale went down the street homeward.

As for Bainbridge, he remained standing where he was, utterly aghast at the situation.

"Then they really mean business," he muttered. "Well, matters are getting exciting. Now to see Tom Train, and we must be on hand to-morrow night to spoil that little game."

Bainbridge went to his lodgings. The next morning he arose quite early, but when he came down to breakfast Mrs. Train informed him that Tom had gone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BETWEEN THE RAILS.

Bainbridge went at once to the round-house, but, as we know, he did not find Tom Train there.

At the depot he found the gang of strikers. He was unable to see Tom until, as we have seen at the close of a preceding chapter, he met him on his way to the round-house.

"Well, old friend," cried Tom, heartily, "I am glad to see you! What can I do for you?"

"Tom, there's lively work for us!" repiled Bainbridge, excitedly.

"What do you mean?"

"I am onto the game."

"What game?"

"The abduction of Edith Fair."

Tom turned very pale.

"My soul!" he gasped. "You don't mean to say that the villain means it?"

"Yes, I do."

"But——"

"Wait a moment and I'll tell you all," said Bainbridge.

Then he proceeded to detail to Tom his experience of the night previous.

The young engineer listened with the deepest of interest. When Bainbridge had finished, he said:

"You have done nobly, Bainbridge. At any cost we must frustrate that scheme. I think it would be best to warn Mr. Fair of the attempt now."

"Ah, but I thought you said not to do it yesterday?"

"Not at that stage of the game. But at present I think it would be safe."

"But would it not be better to entrap these rogues?"

"We can entrap them just as well," declared Tom. "In fact, the plan will work better."

"I believe you are right," agreed Bainbridge. "Very well, let us go and see Mr. Fair at once."

Without further delay, Tom and Bainbridge set out for the Fair residence. Arrived there, they were shown into Mr. Fair's study.

The magnate was astonished and horrified when he heard of the scheme.

A servant was sent for Edith. The young girl was apprised of the plot. Her eyes flashed with scorn.

"I am not surprised," she said. "The villain thinks to force

me to that which he can gain in no other way. I would die before I would marry him."

"It is too horrible to think of!" ejaculated Mr. Fair.

"We certainly owe you much, Tom Train," said Edith, giving Tom a shy glance.

"Do not forget Mr. Bainbridge," said Tom, generously. "He is the one who discovered the plot in the first place."

"Well, in view of affairs, what ought to be done?" asked Mr. Fair.

"Entrap the villains," suggested Bainbridge.

"Can it be done?"

"Easy enough. At the appointed hour, allow them to gain admittance to the house. Have officers on hand and nab them."

"It shall be done!" cried Mr. Fair. "I wonder what Vincent will think when his rascally nephew is jailed for such a nefarious offence?"

"He ought to be ashamed of him," said Tom. "But I will wager that he defends him."

Mr. Fair laughed.

"Very well," he said. "Will you be on hand to-night, gentlemen?"

"We will," replied Bainbridge, as Tom nodded his acquiescence.

"Mr. Bainbridge, I think, will be willing to make all arrangements for entrapping the villains," said Tom.

"Of course," agreed Bainbridge.

"I have got to go out with the express soon," continued Tom, "but I will be on hand to-night. Borrow no alarm, Miss Edith."

"I have no fear," replied the young girl, with a bewitching smile.

A short while later Tom and Bainbridge were on their way downtown.

Bainbridge went at once to police headquarters, but Tom went to the round-house direct.

Wilson Cox had steam up and the locomotive all ready. A short while later Tom pulled the train out of the yard and ran it down to the depot.

Quite a number of passengers were ready to get aboard.

After much hurry and bustle the starting gong rang, and Tom opened the throttle and let the locomotive go ahead at first slowly.

As soon as it was clear of the switches, Tom let the locomotive out for a mile per minute run.

Down a long grade the train flew, up another and around curves. On, faster and faster it sped toward its destination.

A monster hand was at the throttle, a connoisseur in the art of driving a locomotive was in the cab. Grimy, hard-working Wilson Cox could but watch with admiration Tom's skillful handling of the engine. Soon the signal board of a station ahead was seen. It was Waybridge, and here the express must stop.

Tom whistled the station, and then gradually applied the air-brakes.

The train came gradually to a stop, and without the least jar to the passengers in the cars.

At Waybridge more passengers got on. It was now what might be called a heavy train.

But Wilson Cox worked up steam until it seemed as if the gauge would burst. Once more out upon the level rails the train ran.

There were long grades to the next station, which was Newton.

Up one of these grades Tom had often noticed beside the railroad, and distant from it not one hundred yards, a small house.

It was an humble abode, and Tom had often noticed the mistress of the place, a rather handsome though poorly dressed woman. A child, a little baby girl, played in the yard.

The thought had once came to Tom, supposing the child should carelessly wander out upon the track. A passing train at any moment might strike it. A curve was rounded just before reaching it, and a train going even at slow speed could hardly be stopped.

The thought had impressed Tom somewhat strangely, and oddly enough he had fallen into the habit of slowing up a little and looking for the child just beyond the curve.

But upon the present day he had not slowed up.

Suddenly the train turned the curve. Tom, with a chill of horror, saw a tiny form playing between the rails.

The train could not be stopped in time. The mighty locomotive must surely pass over that innocent, precious little atom of humanity, and crush it into nothingness.

Tom Train dropped the lever handle with a sickening, heart-rending cry of awful horror and pain.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DARING RESCUE.

Tom Train for the briefest second of time could see no possible way of saving that innocent child. In its ignorance of danger it was playing between the rails.

Tom saw the whole as in a dream. Saw the child and saw a white-faced mother rushing from the cottage by the track.

Then the spell was off.

In a flash of time he had leaped through the door in the cab, along the platform he ran, and was down upon the pilot in a moment.

Over the cowcatcher's edge he hung, and made one desperate attempt to grasp the innocent one.

It was an awful risky thing to do—a dangerous feat.

The least relaxation of the muscles, a single mistake, and instant and awful death would be the result. None knew this better than Tom.

But he had not stopped to think of danger—there was no time. All happened in a few brief seconds.

One instant—one infinitesimal atom of time he hovered over the cowcatcher of the flying locomotive. Every nerve was like steel and when he felt a firm clutch upon the baby's clothing it was to Tom like the feeling of an ecstatic thrill.

But Wilson Cox in the cab had closed the throttle and applied the air-brakes, bringing the train to a stop a few rods beyond the cottage.

It was well that this was done, for Tom had found that he was unable to draw himself back from his extended position with the strength of one arm.

With the other he held the child aloof and safe. It seemed an age to Tom Train before the locomotive came to a stop.

Then he rolled from the cowcatcher down upon the sleepers and there lay quite done out. When Wilson Cox dashed some water in his face, however, he came to.

When Tom scrambled to his feet he found himself the center of an excited crowd.

The passengers had of course all piled out of the train to discover what the trouble was. In the interim the agonized mother had reached the spot, and now had her darling safe in her arms.

"Oh, sir," she cried, gratefully, rushing up to Tom, "I owe my darling's life to you. Only for your bravery those cruel iron wheels would have taken my baby from me. Oh, I can never thank you enough!"

"Madam, I am almost as glad as you to think that I was

successful," replied Tom, modestly. "I knew that I could not stop the train in time, and there was no other way."

The true account of the affair had by this time been given the crowd by Wilson Cox.

At once a powerful wave of sympathy was created, and everybody crowded forward to get a look at Tom Train, the brave young engineer who had added yet another honor to his laurels as a genuine hero.

But Tom was averse to public display.

He retreated to the cab and began to ring the bell for all aboard. But the crowd cheered him just the same.

Everybody piled aboard. The conductor gave the signal, and Tom opened the throttle.

In a few moments the fast express was again flying over the rails at a tremendous rate of speed.

Nothing more of note happened until Lee, the terminal station, was reached. Here Tom generally had an hour to spend before returning with the homeward express.

It was long after dark before the express was once more under way on the homeward run.

As Tom went over the scene of the thrilling episode of the afternoon, he exchanged glances with Wilson Cox, and both instinctively glanced at the little cottage by the track.

Only a light in the window could be seen.

But Tom could not help but think what a terrible night that would have been for the agonized mother, had he not been so fortunate as to have saved the little life that day.

Where now all was joy and gladness, there would have been sorrow and anguish. In that realization the young engineer was well repaid.

The same thoughts were passing through the mind of Wilson Cox.

The fireman and the engineer simply exchanged glances. Words could not have expressed matters to them better.

On fled the fast express through the night.

Every interval, as needed, Tom pulled the whistle-valve or the bell-cord as crossings were passed like a flash.

As the train now drew nearer Montclair, Tom felt a peculiar thrill.

The balance of the night was to hold for him many thrilling incidents.

In spite of the steel-like quality of his nerves, he could not help but feel a trifle nervous.

At length the lights of Montclair came in sight.

Tom looked at the chronometer. It lacked but a few minutes of ten o'clock.

The express would be right on time.

Wilson Cox proceeded to make things ship-shape in the cab, and Tom, leaning out of the window, caught the colored signal lights, which told him that the switches were right.

Then over the switches the flying train leaped like a thing of life. A few moments after it rolled into the depot.

Wilson Cox, who knew that Tom wanted to get off as quickly as possible, said:

"Go ahead, Tom. I'll house the engine and take care of everything."

"Will you?" cried Tom, eagerly. "I'll make it all right with you."

"There is no need of that," cried the generous stoker. "I am more than that in your debt, Tom."

Tom therefore left the engine at once. In the depot there was a reserved room for the engineers. Here Tom changed his clothes, and then went directly home.

He entered the house to meet his mother, who had an anxious expression upon her face.

"My son," she said, "Mr. Bainbridge has just gone out, and before he left he requested me to tell you to meet him at eleven o'clock at the entrance to Mr. Fair's driveway. He would give no further explanation, nor did I ask any."

"At eleven o'clock?" cried Tom, eagerly. "All right, I'll be there."

Then he paused as he saw the expression upon his mother's face.

In an instant he clasped her in his arms.

"I do not doubt your honor, my son," she said, simply, "but I hope that you will not get into danger."

"Have no fears, mother," cried Tom, earnestly. "There is no risk in that which I am undertaking."

"Then I will ask for no further explanation," she said.

"But you shall have it," cried Tom. "I have no secrets from you, mother."

With this he proceeded to tell her all. He detailed the villainy of Harvey Hale and his nefarious plan of abducting Edith Fair.

Mrs. Train listened with horror to the recital.

"I cannot believe that Harvey has turned out to be such a rascal," she said, in surprise, "but then, he always did have an inclination to the evil. If he does not stop soon, I fear for him."

"Ah, but he is not half the villain that his scheming uncle, Berkeley Vincent, is," declared Tom.

Mrs. Train's fears were set at rest with this explanation, and soon Tom left the house to keep his appointment with his friend Bainbridge.

As he struck out through the darkness for Mr. Fair's residence, his mind was in a state of tumult. He experienced a strange foreboding, which he could not explain, that serious developments were close at hand.

CHAPTER XX.

ENTRAPPED.

It was not a great ways to Mr. Fair's residence.

But the night was dark as Erebus, and Tom was, for a time, at a loss to locate the entrance to the driveway.

After a time, however, he succeeded in doing so, and now he began to look about for Bainbridge.

But he had not much trouble in this. Suddenly he heard a sibilant whisper at his left:

"Is that you, Tom Train?"

"It is," replied Tom. "Who are you?"

He asked the question as a precaution.

"I am Bainbridge."

"Good! We are in plenty of time, are we not?"

"A great plenty. The rascals have not showed up yet."

Tom crept into the cover of the hedge where his companion was.

It was so dark that they could not see each other's faces, but they gripped hands in greeting.

"I have been looking for you," declared Bainbridge. "I knew you would come."

"Nothing but a railroad wreck could have detained me," declared Tom. "But is it not near time?"

"Yes. I expect they will soon show up. It is very near eleven thirty now."

"Are we to remain here?"

"I thought it the most likely place," replied Bainbridge.

"But what if they should gain entrance in some other way? How should we know it?"

"That is all provided for. We have several officers in the house ready to welcome them when they come."

"Ah, I see!"

Both relapsed into silence now.

Time passed slowly.

It seemed an age of suspense to Tom Train before any sign of those for whom they were watching appeared.

Then suddenly there came a distant, grating sound, like the turning or cramping of a wheel, and the muffled tread of horses.

Bainbridge clutched Tom's arm.

"Come!" he said, huskily. "This is our time."

Together they crept across the road and into a dense grove of pine trees.

As they drew nearer they heard now the rattle of harness and the stamping of horses' feet.

Then human voices were heard in a hoarse monotone. All was dark as Egypt.

But just for an instant one of the party flashed the light of a dark lantern about the vicinity.

It was a brief glimpse, but it was sufficient to reveal to the two watchers a closed carriage and pair of black horses, which were tethered to a tree near.

Two muffled men were by the carriage and one by the horses' heads.

"Confound it, Jack, don't do that again!" growled a hoarse voice. "Somebody might see us."

Goldurn the luck, Clem!" retorted the man with the dark lantern. "I kean't see nothin'. It's as dark as a pocket in here."

"Shut up your jawing!" exclaimed a voice, instantly recognized by the two watchers.

"It is Hale himself!" muttered Tom Train.

"Yes," agreed Bainbridge. "All of the talent is here. That is good, for we may nab them all at once."

"Listen!"

The three kidnappers had now left the horses tethered, and had paused a moment in the verge of the pines to consult.

They talked in a husky monotone, but every word was caught by the listeners.

"Waal, now, Clem, you laid out the scheme. Let's have some directions," said Jack Fisher.

"All right," replied Clem Butler. "If you do as I tell ye, we'll get the gal out all right."

"Go ahead," said Harvey Hale, impatiently.

"Thar's a bit of trellis-work over that side portico. I'll climb up there and carry up the rope. Then, Hale, you can come up with the chloroform. It'll be easy ter jimmy that window which opens into an upper hall. The gal's room, I've diskivered, is at the other end of that corridor. Ain't that so, Hale?"

"I believe it is," replied Hale, impatiently.

"All right. Now I'll steal into the room an' give her the drug. Then you can help me ter carry her ter ther window, an' we can jest lower her down by ther rope. Ther next thing is inter ther carriage an' off."

"That's good," said Hale.

"Then we understand it all."

"Yes."

"Come on then."

The three kidnappers crept away in the darkness.

"Now," said Bainbridge, in a tense whisper, "the crisis has come, Tom. May the gods be with us."

"Ay," whispered Tom, with set lips. "Of course we will let them enter the house?"

"Of course."

"And when they are nabbed by the police within——"

"Then we are to capture the one on the outside."

"We will do it."

"We will!"

With grim determination they followed the kidnappers like silent shadows into the grounds of Mr. Fair's residence. Among the shrubbery they crept and soon had reached the trellis spoken of by Fisher.

Tom and Bainbridge secreted themselves close by, and waited for a signal to make action.

In a few moments outlined against the sky they could see the form of the kidnapper going up the trellis.

He was evidently a skilled burglar, for the window above was forced without the slightest noise or trouble. Then Hale was seen climbing up.

The dark forms of the two kidnappers disappeared in the house.

Tom and Bainbridge waited a moment for a sign from within.

Then a loud yell came from within the house, a light flashed up and a pistol-shot rang out.

There were sounds of a scuffle, but the two watchers did not wait for that.

In an instant they were upon Butler, who had tumbled to the fact that his pals were captured, and had turned to flee.

The ruffian made a hard struggle, but Tom and Bainbridge overpowered him, and manacles which the latter possessed were slipped upon his wrists.

Then lights flashed from all the windows in the house; servants and officers rushed about.

The trap was a clever one, and had worked like a charm. Just at the right moment the two villains had been nabbed by the police, and they were almost instantly overpowered.

As Tom and Bainbridge appeared with the third conspirator, the climax was capped.

And foremost in the group stood Harvey Hale.

It was impossible for the young villain to attempt to prevaricate or wriggle out of the situation.

He was caught; his game was exposed, and imprisonment and disgrace were sure to be his.

But in the face of all this he showed no repentance, no humiliation, but rather sullen defiance.

As Mr. Fair confronted him, he, for a moment, winced, but the next instant hurled curses at the magnate. The kind-hearted millionaire had thought of leniency, but now he said, sternly:

"You do not deserve to be spared, Harvey Hale. Take them all away, officers. I will appear against them to-morrow."

"You will, eh?" gritted Hale, savagely. "Curse ye, your time is near at hand. Only a few more days now, and Uncle Berkeley will squeeze you like a cut lemon. Oh, I'll get out of this scrape, and I'll have it out with ye yet, Jim Fair, and you, too, Tom Train. Curse ye all!"

Foaming and fuming in an insane manner, the villain was led away.

Mr. Fair accepted the congratulations of all upon the narrow escape of his daughter, but though he was happy in the realization of his escape from a terible blow, he felt the shadow of great disaster hanging over him, and knew of no power to avert it.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARGED WITH MURDER.

A mighty sensation was created in Montclair when the particulars of the affair at Mr. Fair's house came out in the morning newspapers.

Harvey Hale, though always accounted a bit wild, had figured among the reputable young men of the town. That he

would stoop to such infamy as this at which he had been caught red-handed seemed much beyond belief.

Like wildfire the report spread. It was upon everybody's tongue.

Mr. Fair and Edith came in for warm congratulations upon their fortunate escape.

Every eye was turned upon Berkeley Vincent, to see what effect the affair would have upon him.

The aged villain was in part non-committal. He, however, was disposed to defend his rascally nephew.

His first move was to go down and bail him out in a very large sum. Hale was held for trial within ten days.

But Hale had hardly left the police station when an officer placed a hand upon his shoulder.

"You are my prisoner," he said.

"What!" gasped the villain. "I have just been discharged."

"I have a new warrant."

"A new warrant?"

"Yes."

Both Hale and Vincent were dumfounded. The latter asked imperiously:

"What is the charge?"

"There are several counts," replied the officer. "I believe murder and wrecking a railroad train are the principal ones."

Hale turned deadly pale. For a moment he was the picture of abject fear.

"Murder!" he gasped. "Wrecking a railroad train! Impossible! Who the deuce has brought this charge against me?"

"I believe the gentleman's name was Bainbridge."

Vincent and Hale exchanged startled glances.

"Bainbridge!" gritted Vincent, between set teeth. "It seems to me he is pretty much interested in our affairs. Has he got sufficient evidence to convict?"

"I cannot say!" replied the officer. "You must come with me."

"I will see to it that such a slander upon my nephew's character does not go unpunished," fumed Vincent, furiously. "You shall be admitted to bail anyway, Harvey."

But the justice would not accept bonds of Vincent.

"We are obliged to hold the prisoner without bonds," he said. "It is a serious charge. In fact, if he is proved guilty it will clear and liberate a man now held upon the same charge."

"Lucius Lamont!" gritted Hale.

Argument was of no avail. The judge was inexorable, and back to prison Mr. Harvey Hale went.

A new sensation was thus placed before the excited public.

But Vincent left the police station in a towering passion.

"I will interview that Mr. Bainbridge!" he gritted. "And curse him! I will learn him not to interfere with my affairs or my nephew's. I'll have his life yet."

Vincent knew of no other place to look for Bainbridge than the railroad yards.

Accordingly he went thither in a furious frame of mind. But when he inquired of the boss of the yard for Bainbridge, he was told that he would be found in Mr. Fair's office.

"In Fair's office!" muttered Vincent, savagely. "They're all hanging together like glue, ain't they? Ah, well, they are a cunning set, but not sharp enough to beat me. Ha, ha, ha! I hold the trump card. But a few more days and I will play it. Then, Jim Fair, you may go out of Montclair ruined and disgraced. The M. N. & L. road will be mine, and I would like to see the man who will dare to gainsay my authority in this town then."

Thus chuckling, the arch villain entered the depot. He went boldly to Mr. Fair's room.

With an insolence which merited a stern reception he did not pause to rap, but boldly opened the door and walked in.

Mr. Fair was sitting at his desk, and Bainbridge near him. The railroad magnate sprang up in surprise.

He frowned at sight of Vincent, and exclaimed:

"Berkeley Vincent!"

Vincent smiled sardonically.

"So it is!" he said, coolly.

"What do you wish here?" asked Mr Fair, sternly.

Vincent's gaze was fixed on Bainbridge. He took a step toward him and hissed:

"You are the skunk who has dared to swear out a warrant against my nephew."

"Well," said Bainbridge, quietly, "it is a matter of interest to you, then?"

"It is," replied Vincent, savagely. "I propose to defend my nephew. Simply because his boyish passion led him to rashly attempt the forcing of his affections upon Edith Fair, does not imply that he is guilty of murder, or of wrecking railroad trains."

"That is a question to be decided in court," returned Bainbridge, calmly. "You will have all the opportunity that is necessary to defend your nephew there."

"Then you dare to bring that accusation against him?"

"I have dared it."

"Are you a detective?"

"Perhaps I am, in this case."

"What is your evidence?"

"I must repeat that all this will be brought up at the trial. I need only add, though, that I have full and complete evidence to clear Lucius Lamont."

"You have, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well," gritted Vincent, savagely, "I will say that you're a liar! Curse ye for a meddling fool. But you'll never meddle with any of my affairs again, by Jupiter! Swear that you'll withdrew your charge against my nephew, or I'll kill you!"

A revolver gleamed in the villain's hand and it covered Bainbridge.

It was a moment of thrilling sort. Murder was in the eyes of the infuriated Vincent.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ATTACHMENT.

An ordinary man might have been alarmed at the situation.

But Bainbridge sat gazing into the muzzle of Vincent's revolver with a coolness and nerve that was wonderful.

"Bah! Put up your shooter!" he said, sternly. "Don't take me for a fool! You would not dare to shoot me!"

He was right. Vincent had only been testing his opponent's courage.

He did not dare to shoot his man in that public place. It would have meant ruin and death to him. He could not afford to incur the law now upon the very verge of his accession to ill-gotten fortune.

Bainbridge knew this well, and knew he was safe. The villain, seeing that his plan had failed, lowered his revolver.

"Your escape is a narrow one," he gritted. "If I followed proper dictates I'd kill you on the spot."

"Save your threats," said Bainbridge, disdainfully.

"Who are you?" asked Vincent, savagely.

"I am Jerry Bainbridge."

Vincent glared at his foe as if he would penetrate some veil which concealed a hidden identity. But nowhere in his belief had he seen this man before.

He was baffled, disappointed, and ugly. He turned to the door to pause upon the threshold and say:

"Take my word, you and I are not done yet, Jerry Bainbridge. I will bring you to the wall yet, or die in the attempt."

The door closed behind him. All this while Mr. Fair had sat like one stupefied. Then he met the gaze of Bainbridge.

"And to think that all these years I have nurtured such a viper in my bosom," groaned the millionaire.

"His equal for downright cussedness I have never seen," declared Bainbridge. "But never mind, we will fetch him up yet."

"Then you think you really have evidence that Hale cut that wire and caused that train wreck?"

"I have two accomplices in prison now who have confessed."

"That is enough. Oh, how my eyes have been uncovered! But I can never repay you, Mr. Bainbridge, or Mr. Train, either, for such great service."

"Don't think of that," said Bainbridge, rising, "only keep a stiff upper lip. We'll beat them yet."

"Ah, but I cannot see the way!" groaned the millionaire. "Only a few more days and the villain will foreclose upon this railroad. How can I raise half a milion dollars? Whoever lends it to me will have to do it upon my personal recognizance. I can give no security."

A peculiar light shone in the eyes of Bainbridge.

"Have you tried to raise it?" he asked.

"I have tried in vain."

"Have you no friends?"

"None who are able to help me through this pass," groaned the magnate.

Bainbridge seemed to experience a tremor. Then he advanced and laid a hand upon Mr. Fair's shoulder.

"Sir," he said, in an altered manner and voice, "I want to speak a few words of cheer to you. Keep up! Your deliverance is near at hand. I mean what I say."

Mr. Fair was not only impressed, but astounded.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

But as he turned the door closed behind Bainbridge and he was gone.

"That is queer," muttered the millionaire, as he turned to his desk. "That man puzzles me. He has a good heart and I like him. But I cannot make him out. However, what is the use for me to fight against fate? Vincent certainly holds those mortgages. Next Friday he will simply foreclose, and how am I going to help it?"

For days past Mr. Fair had consulted every known and feasible experiment or expedient to raise the necessary half million dollars to tide over his financial reverses.

It seemed utterly impossible to do so.

To the successful business man money seems to come unsought. But once let him get into a strait, and the fickle article seems to take a tantalizing delight in keeping at as inaccessible a height as possible.

The nervous strain to which he had been subjected for a few days past had told upon Mr. Fair most cruelly.

There were lines in his face, and silver hairs in his beard and hair which had not been there before.

Much more of the kind of strain and he would succumb to nervous prostration.

In all of this trouble Edith had been to him like a ministering angel.

"All will come out right, papa," she said, hopefully. "The good God who watches over us will not see us come to harm."

But the days passed one by one, and the fatal day of foreclosure drew near.

It seemed to the millionaire as if his fortunes were all tumbling about him.

It was with a mighty effort that he dragged himself one day down to the office. It was the last day of grace.

At twelve o'clock, the time within which he was to procure the half million, he was sitting at his desk.

He had looked about the office, and a strange sensation had come over him.

It was like that experienced by the man about to drown. But there seemed not even a straw to grasp.

In a few moments he would be dispossessed of all he had in the world. He would be cut off, cast out a beggar and an outcast.

It was hard to think of. In fact, his brain reeled. But the moment the office door opened and men came in, he seemed to revive.

A merciful Providence seemed to give him new strength. He arose calmly and faced his fate.

Four men entered the office.

One was a constable, two were lawyers, and the fourth was Berkeley Vincent. There was a mocking smile upon the villain's lips.

One of the lawyers advanced, with a writ in his hand, and said:

"We have here mortgages upon this railroad, given to secure stock in the White Hill Mining Co., which has become insolvent and unable to pay one cent upon a dollar of its indebtedness. Your name is upon the stock and upon the mortgage notes. As they are due, we have come to demand their payment, or we shall be compelled to seize the property and sell it to satisfy the creditors."

"There is but one creditor, I believe," said Mr. Fair, coldly. "Is not that so?"

"You are right," replied the lawyer.

"Who is he?"

"Mr. Berkeley Vincent."

"I thought so," said Mr. Fair, quietly. "This is all a swindling game of his to beat me out of all that I have got. How much money do you ask of me?"

"One-half million dollars will tide over those mortgages that are now due."

"I have not got that amount of money," replied Mr. Fair, rigidly.

"Then do your duty, officer," cried Vincent. "Attach the place at once."

The constable advanced and laid his hand upon the railroad company's books and began to read the writ of attachment.

But at that moment the door was thrown open and a man walked into the room.

"Hold!" he cried, in a voice like thunder. "Stop where you are."

It was Jerry Bainbridge.

Vincent turned upon him white with fury.

"Get out of here!" he yelled. "What do you want here?"

"You will know at once, you miserable dog," retorted Bainbridge, in a voice of steel. "I am here to play checkmate to your fiendish game. You call for one-half million dollars to redeem that stock and tide over those mortgage notes. Mr Fair has told you that he had not the money. I order off this attachment, for Mr. Fair has the money. It is in this satchel, and I lend it to him on his word for security."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHECKMATED.

It was a tableau for an artist. All stood gazing at Bainbridge in astonishment. Not one man believed that he heard aright the startling declaration.

"You!" gasped Vincent, in sheer amazement. "You lend Fair half a million? Why, you graceless pauper, you never saw a thousand dollars in the course of your life!"

"One thousand!" repeated Bainbridge. "Whether I have or not is nothing to you. You call for half a million dollars. That will save Mr. Fair from ruin. This money must be paid for stock certificates in the White Hill Mining Co. The payment of that indebtedness will discharge the mortgage notes from the railroad and clear it of the incumbrance. Is not this so?"

"How did you learn so much?" gritted Vincent.

"Mr. Fair is really solvent. He lacks only the requisite amount of money to redeem this stock. You have by scheming shortened him up, and taken advantage of this to pinch him. Is not that a villainous and ungenerous game to play upon a man who has been your friend and backer?"

Vincent was purple in the face with rage and defeat.

"If so, why has he not raised the money before this to redeem that stock at the par value?" he snapped.

"Because the depreciation in the stock has made him a heavy loser, and these mortgage notes have been given to fill the gap. All of Mr. Fair's wealth is employed in this railroad. There has been no safe or logical way for him to draw half a million from the road to fill that gap. But the stock has depreciated, as you intended. I advance Mr. Fair half a million to remove the mortgage from his road. Now, sir, I demand the surrender of those stock certificates. They belong to Mr. Fair, and the money paid for them must go into the treasury there to await the action of the stockholders. As you and Mr. Fair are the principal stockholders it lies between you. Now Mr. Fair, I believe, holds the controlling number of shares. He can vote the money in the treasury for any purpose he may see fit, and have the corporation dissolved by decree of court. Where are you? Does it not look as if you were beaten?"

Vincent's face was apoplectic in hue.

"Curse you for a fiend!" he hissed. "You are too sharp. But I am not beaten yet. Bluffing will not do it. I demand to see the half-million dollars. It must be paid to me as the treasurer."

"Not if the controlling vote of the corporation makes other disposition of the money," replied Bainbridge coolly.

Vincent saw his defeat. He had been a winner, but the prompt redeeming of the stock had beaten him.

He had not dreamed of such a thing as the money being raised by Fair. Half a million seemed not an easy sum to procure at once.

He had descended from the pinnacle of victory to the very dregs of defeat. A few moments before he was practically the owner of the railroad. But now he was not even able to claim the money paid in for the White Hill stock.

The prompt producing of the necessary half-million had done this. He could not believe his senses.

He would not believe this man Bainbridge had such an enormous sum of money to his name. It was all a bluff game.

Convinced of this, Vincent was yet defiant.

"Sheriff, do your duty," he once more cried. "Attach everything. They have not the money. It is all an imposture!"

"Hold!" cried Bainbridge, sternly.

He opened the satchel and deposited upon the table rolls of greenbacks, in which were one-thousand-dollar bills, government coupons, certified checks, and other forms of money.

"It shall be counted in our presence," he declared. "There is half a million there in round numbers. If any more is required I will soon procure it."

Up to this moment Mr. Fair had sat like one dazed at his desk. Now he staggered to his feet.

"Mr. Bainbridge!" he gasped. "Am I dreaming? Where did you get that money?"

"It is mine," was the prompt reply, "or at least, it is yours now. I lend it to you."

"Lend it to me!" exclaimed the railroad magnate, in a daze. "Are you a good fairy? I never knew that you had that much money."

"You can never judge a man's wealth by his appearance," laughed Bainbridge.

"But—you have professed poverty."

"I had a good and strong reason for doing so," replied Bainbridge. "I do not care to state it now. As for my wealth, I am worth ten millions, and if I have to use the whole of it to do so, this graceless hound, Berkeley Vincent, shall be made to feel the weight of the law!"

Vincent was overwhelmed. He sank faint and trembling into a chair.

In an instant's time he saw all his fancied wealth gone from him like a fleeting vision. All the pluck was taken out of him now. He was servile and submissive once more.

"It's all up!" he muttered, in a maudlin way. "It was only a little deal in stocks. It's done every day, gentlemen. You must not think hard of me for it."

"It was a swindling game, pure and simple! "declared Bainbridge, "and the clutches of the law are about you, Berkeley Vincent. Mr. Fair, I am glad to serve you. Make what use you wish of that money, and when you get ready you can repay it without interest."

"I will repay it double!" cried Mr. Fair, delirious with delight. "My soul, is it possible that I am saved?"

Vincent had sank into a chair. In that awful moment of defeat a great change had come over him. The money-cunning in his eyes was fierce and strong. His gaze was fixed upon the pile of wealth upon the table.

In his franzied moment of insanity the result of his defeat a desperate, mad plan came into his mind.

None but the madman could have conceived and executed it.

"Greenbacks and gold," he muttered. "Ah, there is a fair part of the fortune which was in my grasp a moment since. It rightfully belongs to me. It is hard to lose it. I need not —I will not give it up."

With a maniacal shriek he made a bound forward. One blow dashed Mr. Fair aside.

Then with swift movement the villain dashed the wealth into the satchel, clutched it and started for the door. The sheriff interposed, but the maniac struck him down.

Out of the office and into the depot platform ran Vincent. He looked for one brief flash for an avenue of escape.

To the right—to the left—were groups of people. He fancied in his excitement that all knew his guilt and would try to stop him.

Just in front was the track. Upon the siding stood a locomotive. The engineer, Rube Hutchins, was oiling the driving rod bearings, and the cab was empty.

In his insanity it seemed to Vincent a safe and sure way of escape. He did not wait a moment to count the costs.

But like a meteor he sprang across the platform and reached the cab entrance. Hutchins' back was turned and Vincent gained the cabin.

He grasped the throttle bar and pulled the valve open. The engine fairly leaped forward.

Rube Hutchins, the astounded engineer, saw the villain's purpose, and made a desperate spring forward. He reached the platform of the cab, but Vincent hurled him back onto the platform.

In another instant the locomotive sped out of the depot.

The switch was set, and out on the main line ran the engine. Mr. Fair and all in the office had rushed in pursuit of Vincent but all were too late.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE END.

Near the office door, just before Vincent's appearance, Tom Train had been standing.

He had seen the villain's maniacal act, and understood it instantly. He saw Hutchins hurled back, and then, realizing that the situation was a desperate one, he made action.

With a few flying bounds he went down the platform.

There was not time to reach the cab, nor did Tom essay it He made a clutch at the couplings on the rear of the tender and like a monkey went up to the narrow platform above them

This was the sight which brought the great shout from the crowd.

As the locomotive went flying out over the switches, Tom Train was seen to clamber over the back of the tender.

Tom knew that he was in for a hard tussle with Vincent for the villain would certainly not surrender easily.

But he was determined to prevent his escape. Therefore, with full resolution, he went down into the cab.

Vincent turned just in time to see him coming down over the coal in the tender. The expression of surprise upon the villain's face was for a moment most intense.

Then his eyes flashed luridly and his face turned black as a thunder-cloud. He grabbed an iron poker and sprang toward him.

The boy engineer knew that if he should receive that blow it would be apt to cripple him. He therefore avoided it by retreating back up the coal heap.

At the same moment he seized an iron coupling pin and hurled it at Vincent.

It struck the villain fairly in the stomach. For a moment it completely took his wind, and he staggered back, dropping the poker.

It was Tom's opportunity, and he went down over the coal with a rush.

The next moment the two were locked in a deadly struggle.

Tom was young and supple, while he was old and stiff in joints. Yet his frenzy gave him a strength which for a moment baffled Tom's best efforts.

But the contest became a brief, though terrific one. Vincent was thrown heavily upon the floor of the cab. In that position Tom held him while he bound him with some cord which he happened to have in his pocket.

Tom closed the throttle, however, and stopped it. Then he reversed the engine and started on the backward run.

Vincent was cursing and fuming savagely. The young engineer picked up the satchel containing the five hundred thousand dollars and placed it in a locker. He was as cool as could be all the while.

Suddenly a cunning expression came into the villain's eyes.

"Look here, Tom," he cried, in a coaxing manner, "let's compromise. There's half a million in that satchel. Let's divide. I can escape, and nobody will ever suspect you of having the other half."

Tom laughed scornfully.

"Money is not my god as it has been yours, Berkeley Vincent," he said, contemptuously. "My ambition is to see you behind prison bars."

Further talk was out of the question, for the next moment the locomotive rolled into the depot.

Officers were instantly on hand to take Vincent to prison. He was dragged away raving like a maniac.

While Tom Train was fairly embraced by Mr. Fair, the young engineer was actually carried into the office, and there in the presence of Bainbridge, Mr. Fair explained all to him. Tom was dumfounded.

Tom turned an awe-struck gaze upon Bainbridge.

"But—how is this?" he gasped. "I thought you a poor man. How could you lend Mr. Fair half a million?"

Bainbridge advanced with a laugh and said:

"Tom, I must ask you to forgive me for a little bit of deceit. My name is not Bainbridge. I am your eccentric uncle of San Francisco, Allan Train. Now you know me."

"My uncle!" gasped Tom, completely overcome.

"Just so! All the years of my life I have lived as a misanthrope, eccentric and retired. I have amassed a vast fortune, and for the last few years have thought of looking up my relatives so that I might name heirs when my turn to die should come. When I received your mother's letter, asking for assistance for you, I was at once interested. But I was curious to learn what sort of a young man you were, and what was your mettle. That is why I have masqueraded as Bainbridge. I am satisfied. You have the real Train blood in you, Tom. I am proud of my nephew. I discovered that your heart was right, that your morals were pure, and that you were brave and talented. Now, Tom, if you can forgive me for my deceit and can really care for your Uncle Allan, welcome to my arms."

"Care for you!" cried Tom, with a joyous bound forward. "Why, I have liked you from the first time I met you. And you are my Uncle Allan. Oh, won't mother be glad to see you!"

With a few brief explanations this will bring our story of the boy engineer to its close. It was indeed a happy meeting at the home of the Trains when Tom's uncle, the wealthy Californian, met his brother's wife. Mrs. Train was quite overcome.

Great plans for the future were made. With his unlimited resources, Allan Train gladly co-operated with Mr. Fair in the railroad, and Tom was at once made the general manager on a good salary.

Poverty was thenceforth a stranger to the Trains, and the rise in life of Tom Train was meteorical in its course. But the crowning joy of all will be his marriage with lovely Edith Fair, which is soon to occur.

The Trains have a beautiful home in Montclair, and with the Fairs are now the magnates of the place. Joy and prosperity is theirs.

As for the other characters of this story, little need be said. Berkeley Vincent died of apoplexy in prison. Harvey Hale, convicted of murder and train-wrecking, died on the gallows. Brave Wilson Cox is the star engineer of the M. N. & L., and Lucius Lamont is head clerk for Mr. Fair. With this brief explanation let us write

THE END.

Read "WE THREE; OR, THE WHITE BOY SLAVES OF THE SOUDAN," by Allan Arnold, which will be the next number (352) of "Pluck and Luck."

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